



GOLDSMITH'S  
THE TRAVELLER AND  
THE DESERTED VILLAGE

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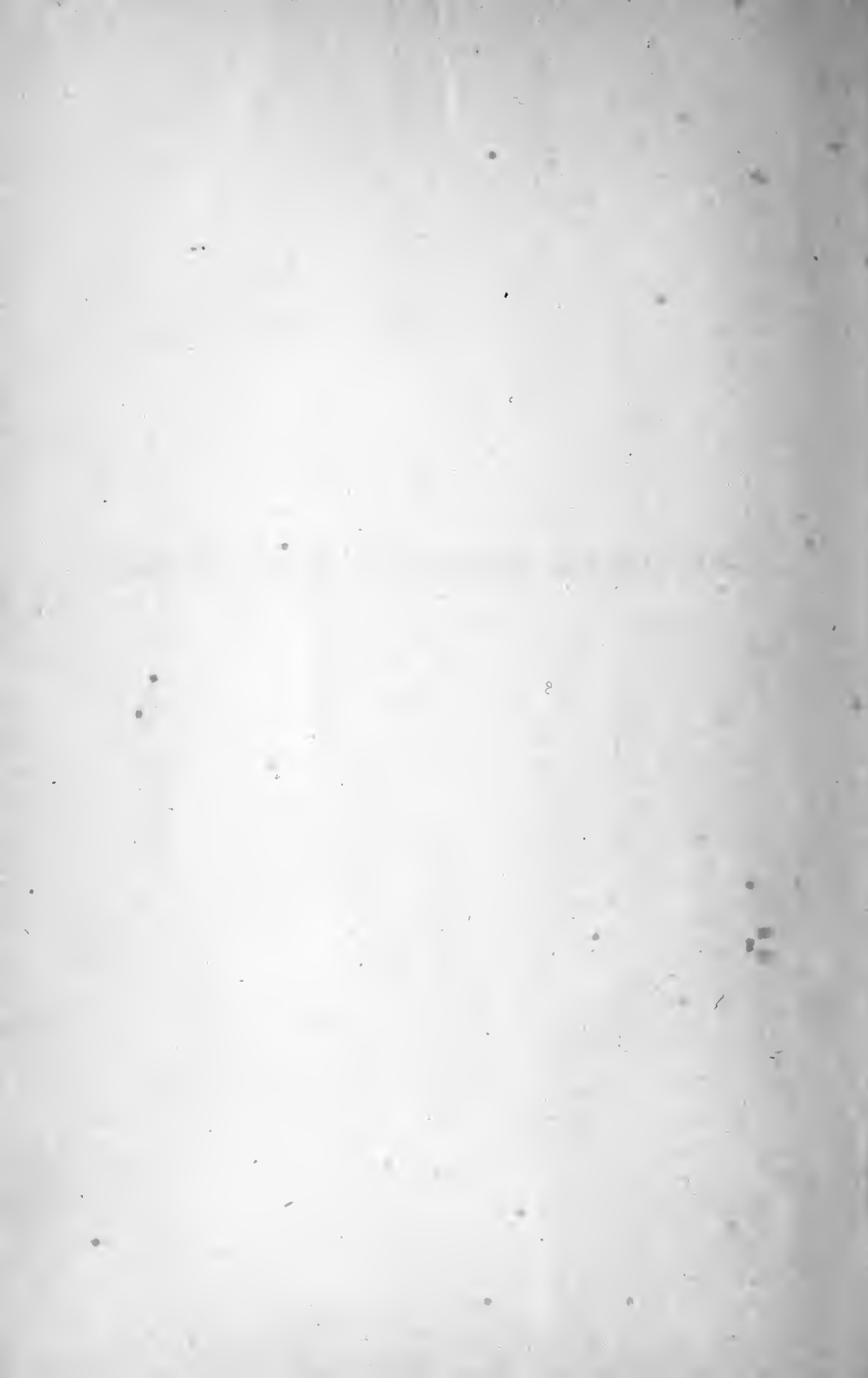
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NEW YORK

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH



TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

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GOLDSMITH'S  
THE TRAVELLER

AND

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

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1909

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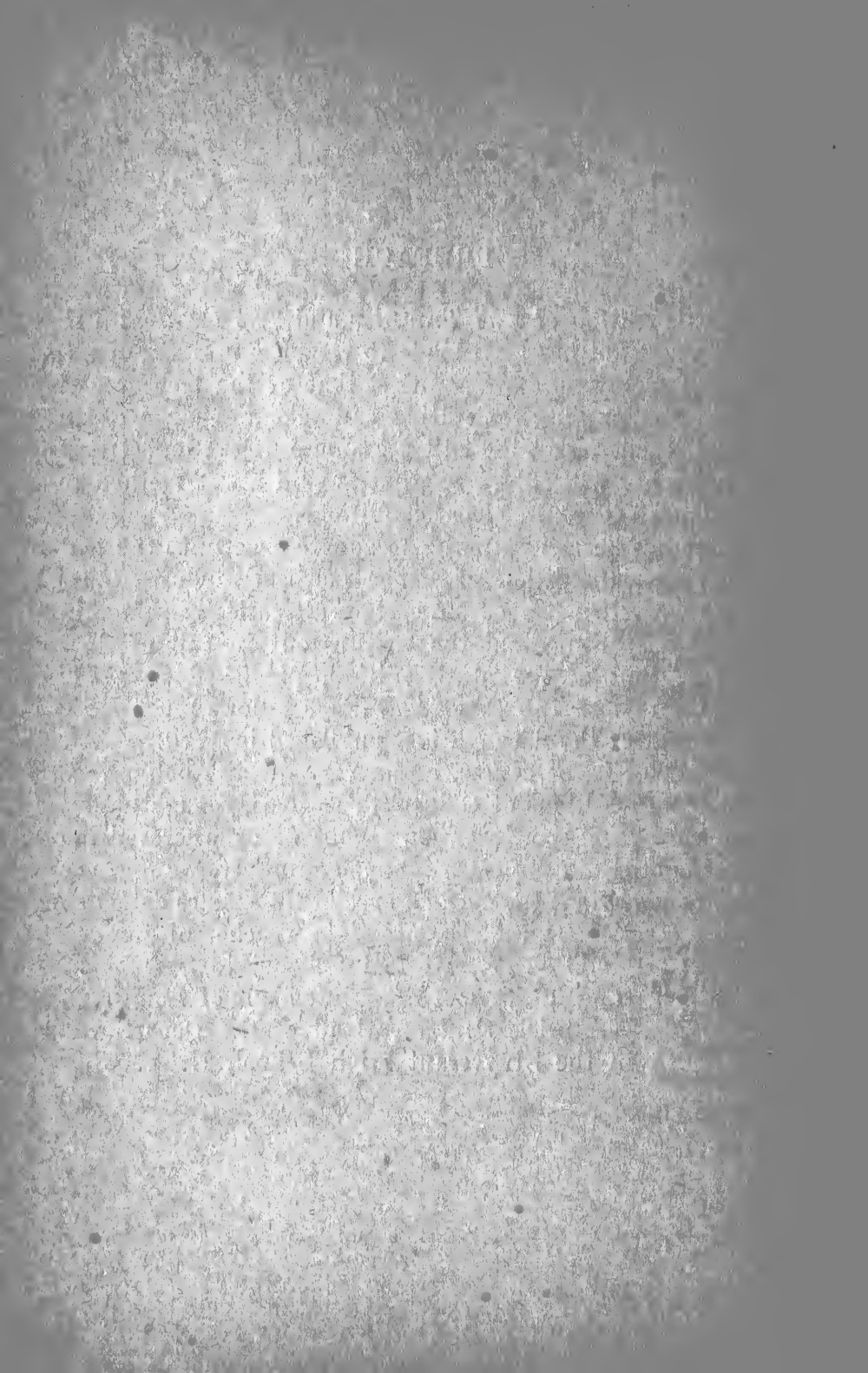
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## PREFACE

In this edition of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* an attempt has been made to view the problem of annotation from two standpoints — that of the teacher and that of the pupil. No edition can take the place of an earnest teacher, and the editor assumes at the outset that every teacher will interpret what is said about method to suit his own ideas and local conditions.

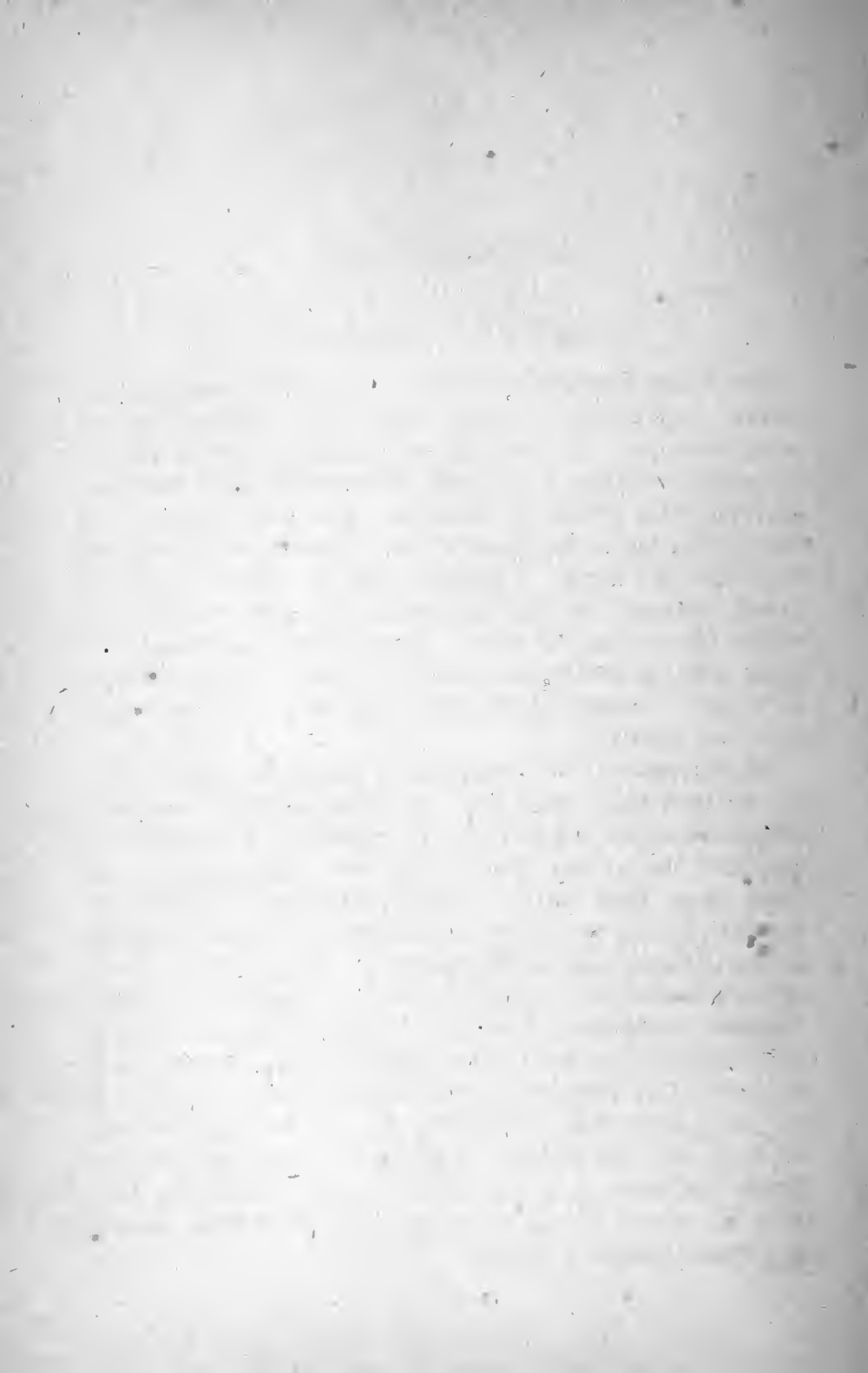
There has been no attempt to adhere exactly to the text of any special edition of either poem, though the text of *The Traveller*, aside from certain alterations in punctuation and spelling, and the writing out in full of final "ed," is that of the ninth edition, published in 1774; while the text of *The Deserted Village* follows much more closely that of the fifth edition, published in 1770.

The editor is, of course, under very definite obligations to preceding editions of Goldsmith's poems, though he has taken care to acknowledge such obligations wherever the matter quoted did not seem common property. For many helpful suggestions the editor's special thanks are extended to Miss Harriet Day, A. B., Associate Teacher of English in the Cortland, N. Y., Normal School; to Samuel E. Weber, Ph. D., High School Superintendent of Louisiana, and to Mr. Frederick H. Law, Head of the Department of English in the Stuyvesant High School, N. Y. City.



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## INTRODUCTION

### LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

**Birth and Parentage.**— Oliver Goldsmith was born November 10, 1728, in Pallas, a lonely little village about ten miles southeast of Limerick, in Ireland. The family of Goldsmith, though of English descent, had for some generations been settled in Ireland. The poet's father, the Reverend Charles Goldsmith, was a country curate of the Established Church, "passing rich on forty pounds a year," although he had to provide for eight children, of whom Oliver was the fifth. When Oliver was about two years old, his father succeeded to a more lucrative living at Lissoy, County Westmeath, and here the poet's boyhood was spent.

**Education.**— Oliver's systematic education began when he was only three years old. His first teacher was a Miss Elizabeth Delap, a relative of the Goldsmiths, who used to assemble the young children of the village and try to teach them their letters. Apparently little "Noll" did not take kindly to his studies, for Miss Delap often spoke of his dullness and his laziness. At the age of six young Oliver entered the village school, the master of which, Thomas, irreverently known as "Paddy," Byrne, pedantic and eccentric, yet not unlikable and a great story-teller, is forever immortalized in *The Deserted Village*. Here, too, the poet displayed little liking for the routine of school work, though his budding fondness for books was noticed. From this time on he was entered at this school and that, with his record always the same, "an indifferent student and fond of reckless pranks."

Unfortunately for fond hopes, his career at Trinity College, Dublin, whither he was sent June 11, 1745, was no more distinguished. Owing to scarcity of means at home, Oliver had to enter college as a sizar,—a student employed in menial tasks about the college to defray his expenses in whole or in part. This was a blow to his pride, and, had it not been for the persuasions of his Uncle Thomas Contrarine, Oliver would have refused to apply for entrance.

Studying when and what he saw fit, and always devising frolics and gayeties to while away the time, he naturally fell into disfavor with his teachers. It is said that on one occasion when the poet-to-be was entertaining in his quarters some of his town acquaintances of both sexes, a certain Wilder, Goldsmith's tutor, burst in the door and knocked his pupil down, and that the latter, sorely humiliated, left college, never expecting to return. Through the good offices of his brother Henry, however, he finally went back to take his degree in 1749, graduating as he had entered, the lowest in the list.

**Attempts at Various Professions.**—Goldsmith was now twenty-one and dependent upon his own talents; his father had died during Oliver's college course; his mother was living upon a meagre pittance at Ballymahon; and his brother Henry, having married and succeeded to the curacy at Pallas, was trying to get along on forty pounds a year. But there was Uncle Contrarine, who had been a staunch friend to his nephew, and to him Oliver turned for advice and funds,—chiefly the latter. A University man and a Goldsmith, of course Oliver must enter the Church,—a dictum of the uncle's in which the nephew finally, though somewhat reluctantly, acquiesced. Then followed the usual two years of probation, which the young candidate for orders put to such scant account, except in the gratification of his taste for reading, that the examining bishop found him "unqualified" for admission into the clergy. At the



solicitation of anxious relatives Oliver then tried the law, with spasmodic attempts at teaching as an avocation.

Three out of the four "learned professions" had now been tried and found wanting; one only was left — medicine. Accordingly, supported by his uncle, in the fall of 1752 Oliver found himself in Edinburgh, enrolled as a "student of physic" at the University. Here he did a little studying — be it said to his credit — but as usual his claim to distinction lay along other channels — as a dandy in dress, as a wit and practical joker, and as a leader in wild and foolish pranks. At the end of two years, however, Edinburgh's stock of excitement beginning to pall, Oliver took it into his head to go abroad, and, again aided by his uncle, embarked for Leyden.

**Wanderings.**—The record of Goldsmith's wanderings survives chiefly in his writings, especially in *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Traveller*, and from them one may trace his line of travel with some accuracy. In the winter of 1755 he was in Leyden making a pretense at study, but in reality spending most of his time and money at gambling, then the national vice of Holland. His funds giving out and the desire to wander again making its appeal, he set out on foot for a journey through Europe, the whims of fancy his only guide.

It is known that he passed through Antwerp, Maestricht and Brussels. In Paris he lingered for a time, possibly pursuing medical courses. Then he appeared in the lecture halls of some of Germany's most famous universities. Switzerland he visited next, staying a time in Basle, Berne and Geneva. Upper Italy then lured him on, for his pen tells of sojourns at Florence, Verona, Mantua, Milan, Carinthia and Padua; it is possible, too, that he tarried in Rome. How the wanderer paid his way is a matter of interesting conjecture, since he started out from Leyden with only a guinea in his pocket. Perhaps he taught his native language now and then; no doubt he tried gambling; but

his chief dependence was on his flute and songs, with which he charmed the peasants into hospitality. According to Boswell, Johnson's talkative biographer, Goldsmith used to pick up a meal or a night's lodging at this university or that, by "disputing," after the custom of the Middle Ages, on some question of philosophy or ethics. Soon this life of idle roving began to pall, for in February, 1756, after an absence of a little over a year, the poet-to-be was once more walking the streets of London, this time penniless and in rags, but with a medical degree, conferred nobody knows how nor where, possibly at Louvain in Belgium.

**Life in London.**—The years immediately following Goldsmith's arrival in London were full of shift and makeshift. A doctor with no patients, a chemist's clerk with long hours and short pay, an usher in boarding schools with life made miserable by his gawky appearance and diffident temperament, a bookseller's hack grinding out prefaces and reviews and criticisms with little hope of literary fame,—his occupations were various, and were followed in turn from sheer necessity. But better things were in store. The ease and grace of his style brought him in 1761 the acquaintance of Dr. Samuel Johnson and other eminent men of letters, and a competency by means of the pen seemed a possibility. He took a suite of rooms in the Temple, famed as the quarters of law-clerks, and a little later, in company with a Mr. Bott, a friend interested in literature, rented a country home on Edgware Road. In 1764 the famous Literary Club was started with Goldsmith as one of the nine charter members; the others were Burke, Reynolds, Nugent, Langton, Beauclerc, Chamier, Hawkins and Johnson. Of the club Macaulay says: "The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known all over London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook."

**Literary Work.**—Goldsmith's first literary venture was

the contribution of critical articles to *The Monthly Review*, a half-literary and a half-political periodical published by one Griffiths, with whom Goldsmith took up his abode, at the sign of the Dunciad, Paternoster Row. This engagement was dissolved at the end of five months, for Griffiths was a driving taskmaster. Goldsmith then joined forces with Dr. Smollett, the famous novelist, and wrote for *The Critical Review*, the leading Tory organ of the day. In 1759 he published his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, a work wide in scope for that day and readable even now because of the charm of its style. In the same year he launched *The Bee*, one of the many periodicals of the 18th century similar in plan and purpose to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, became a contributor to *The Busy-body*, and for a time edited *The Ladies' Magazine*. His "Chinese Letters," in which a Chinese student keenly examines many phases of European life, were published in 1762 under the title of *A Citizen of the World*.

Goldsmith also wrote several biographies and histories, which are read to-day only because of the excellence of his style, as much of his subject matter is worthless. *The Life of Beau Nash* came from the press in 1762; a *History of England*, in 1763; a *History of Rome*, in 1769; the *Life of Thomas Parnell* and the *Life of Lord Bolingbroke*, in 1770; a *History of Greece*, in 1773. A *History of Animated Nature* was left unfinished at his death. The made-to-order seal is set upon all these works, written, as they were, upon the spur of necessity. The enduring fame of their author is grounded upon his pastoral novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1776); his two clever comedies, *The Good Natured Man* (1763), and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773); and his two poems, *The Traveller* (1764), and *The Deserted Village* (1770). In these products of Goldsmith's pen the joy, rather than the necessity, of writing is the distinguishing mark.

**Death and Burial.**—Goldsmith died of a fever in April, 1774, barely forty-five years of age. The news of his death was received by all who knew him with the deepest sorrow. Burke burst into tears; Sir Joshua Reynolds laid aside his brush; newspapers and magazines were filled with tributes to his memory; and, above all, the miserable outcasts who had been befriended by the poet's tenderness, voiced a grief as bitter as it was genuine. It was planned to have a public funeral, but, for some unknown reason, the poet was buried privately in the cemetery of Temple Church. Soon, however, the Literary Club, in memory of its deceased member, caused a monument to be erected in Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey. Dr. Johnson's stately Latin epitaph has been thus translated:

“OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH,—

A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian,  
Who left scarcely any style of writing untouched,  
And touched nothing that he did not adorn.

Of all the passions,  
Whether smiles were to be moved or tears,

A powerful yet gentle master:  
On genius, sublime, vivid, versatile,  
On style, elevated, clear, elegant,—

The love of companions,  
The love of friends,  
And the veneration of readers,  
Have by this monument honored the memory.

He was born in Ireland,  
At a place called Pallas,  
In the parish of Forney, and the county of Longford,  
On the 10th November, 1728,  
Educated at the University of Dublin,  
And died in London,  
4th April, 1774.”

## GOLDSMITH THE MAN

**Personal Appearance.**—"The general cast of Goldsmith's figure and physiognomy was not engaging, and the impression made by his writings on the mind of a stranger was not confirmed by the external graces of their author. In stature he was somewhat under the middle size; his body was strongly built, and his limbs—as one of his biographers expresses it—were more sturdy than elegant. His forehead was low, and more prominent than is usual; his complexion pallid; his face almost round, and pitted with smallpox. His first appearance was, therefore, by no means captivating; yet the general lineaments of his countenance bore the stamp of intellect, and exhibited traces of deep thinking; and when he grew easy and cheerful in company, he relaxed into such a display of benevolent good-humor as soon removed every unfavorable impression. His pleasantry in company, however, sometimes degenerated into buffoonery; and this circumstance, coupled with the inelegance of his person and deportment, often prevented him from appearing to so much advantage as might have been expected from his learning and genius."—*Irving.*

**Generosity and Improvidence.**—"Take thought for the morrow" is a maxim that Goldsmith never learned to heed. No matter how much money he acquired, he always spent just enough more to be perpetually in debt, and his whole life was clouded by his frantic struggles to settle old scores. Not that he was dishonest—even his most severe biographer could not accuse him of that—but he always spent money freely, and it went as often for presents to his friends and gifts to those in distress, as for the gratification of his own desires. All his life he could not help seeing the importance of thrift,

but to learn the lesson himself — that he could not do; and so it is always “poor” Goldsmith that we think of — “poor” in more senses than one.

Much has been made, particularly in Mr. Forster’s biography, of the cold and neglectful attitude of the world toward Goldsmith; but it seems evident that he was his own worst enemy. Anecdotes of his heedless generosity and improvidence are many. Just before he started out from Leyden for his foot trip through Europe, seeing some high-priced tulip roots, he impulsively spent all but his last guinea for them, and sent them to his Uncle Contrarine. Boswell tells how Johnson, being hastily summoned by Goldsmith, who was in danger of arrest for debt to his long-suffering landlady, gave the poet a guinea, went out to sell *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and, on returning, found Goldsmith making merry over a bottle of Madeira which he had bought with Johnson’s gift. Goldsmith’s love for fine dress kept him constantly in debt to tailors, and much of his hack writing was done to satisfy “that little account.” One critic speaks of the poet as “toiling, that he might play; earning his bread by the sweat of his brains, and then throwing it out of the window.” Money matters blighted much of Goldsmith’s later life, and he was often found by his friends in the deepest melancholy. When he died, he was over £2000 in debt. What wonder that Johnson wrote to Boswell, “Was ever poet so trusted before?”

**Other Characteristics.**—In many respects Goldsmith’s character reveals contradictory traits. He was careless about his life, yet almost finically careful about everything that he wrote. The slums of London, and the makeshifts of direst poverty, he knew only too well, yet the purity of his own nature, and the loftiness of his ideals remained unsullied. Beset by sham and conventionality, he was always sincere in what he said and did. Awkward and diffident in speech and person, he

was the personification of ease and grace with the pen. His companions might ridicule him, but they liked him and respected him as a writer. But it is, after all, posterity that measures worth in life and letters; and we love Goldsmith the man despite his faults, because he loved humanity.

## LITERARY CONDITIONS

**Age of Johnson.**—To think of the literature and the literary conditions of the eighteenth century is to think, first of all, of Dr. Samuel Johnson, of whom one critic speaks as “sitting on the throne of literature.” By reason of his learning, his rugged honesty and independence, his aggressiveness in manner and speech, his extraordinary ability at disputation, either on paper or in conversation, his lambent humor, and especially his common-sense — “the quality most characteristic of the majority of educated men and women of that day” — the impression that Johnson made upon all was one “of bigness of body, mind, and spirit.” As a poet, essayist, critic, biographer and lexicographer, his influence was felt in all aspects of the literary activity of his day. The phrase, “Johnsonian age,” bespeaks the type and the trend of the writing of this period. It was distinctly an age of prose, though poetry of the mechanical kind, brought into repute and fashion by Pope and his literary adherents during the preceding century, had not wholly died out.

**The Trend of Literature.**—While the “Johnsonian age” was not remarkably fruitful in authorship, for the dominant intellectual ideas of the day exalted the critical over the creative, and manner over matter, activity in letters was by no means stilled. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne were blazing the way for future novelists; Burke, Chatham, Pitt, Fox and Sheridan were making speeches destined to immortalize eloquence;

Hume, Robertson and Gibbon were at work upon their monumental histories; Goldsmith and Sheridan, through their comedies, were awakening interest in the drama; and, best sign of all, Young, Chatterton, Gray, Collins and Goldsmith, in their "nature poetry," by a closer study and a more faithful revelation of man and nature, were continuing the reaction, begun unconsciously by Thomson in his *The Seasons*, against the classical artificiality of Pope: "poetry of the head was beginning to give way to poetry of the heart."

**Letters as a Living.**—Notwithstanding a certain public interest and pride in the men of letters of this period, the life of a professional writer was apt to know hardship and even actual want. In the age of Pope, a literary aspirant, desiring a reading public, was forced to secure the favor and the support of a member of the nobility. The passing of this system of patronage gave to writing, in the age of Johnson, a more independent and self-respecting tone, but the author who depended solely on his own pen, had a harder task than ever before. There were no publishers, and a writer had to stake his hopes of recognition upon the bookseller, who was often as arbitrary as he was uncultured. Of the literary drudgery that such a situation fostered, Goldsmith himself, in his *Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning*, paints a picture, dark-hued, but faithful to fact. "The author, unpatronized by the great, has naturally recourse to the bookseller. There cannot, perhaps, be imagined a combination more prejudicial to taste than this. It is the interest of the one to allow as little for writing, and for the other to write as much as possible; accordingly, tedious compilations and periodical magazines are the result of their joint endeavors. In these circumstances the author bids adieu to fame; writes for bread; and for that only imagination is seldom called in."



## GOLDSMITH THE POET

**Popularity of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*.**  
— The reasons for the perennial popularity of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*—especially the latter—are no mystery. One ground of immediate appeal is the easy and melodious flow of the verse; often a merely casual reading is enough to fix in mind for all time many of the couplets. Not only did Goldsmith have a nice ear for harmonies of sound, but it was his habit to write with laborious care, and then to revise until he secured a graceful union of sound and sense; the various editions of *The Traveller*, for example, record many changes in the fashioning of verses, most of them decidedly for the better. The same care marks Goldsmith's choice and use of words. His natural taste was for the short and vivid noun and the homely adjective. The gift of concrete visualization was born in him, and to make others see the pictures of his remembrance or his fancy just as he saw them,—such a purpose called for the careful weighing of epithets and turning of phrases. It is this pictorial vividness that puts the greater part of Goldsmith's verse in the very fore-front of descriptive poetry. There is still another reason why *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* are dear to poetry lovers,—their genuineness of ring. The poet's heart pulsed with love and sympathy for the wretched and the lowly; and when he sings this, his favorite theme, there is no mockery in his humor, no hollowness in his pathos. It is only when Goldsmith turns away from personal things and spins out measured abstractions on subjects like wealth and luxury, that his numbers lose their lilt and color, and his thought becomes heavy and dull. Taken all in all, however, *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*, despite their lack of sustained strength, and their didactic tone here and there, are poems that will continue to appeal to the human

heart so long as simplicity, sincerity and sympathy make for a fellowship of understanding.

**Meter and Form.**—The meter of both *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* is the conventional meter of the classical and the Johnsonian age,—the heroic couplet, or rhymed iambic pentameter. Although Gray and Thomson had already departed somewhat from the stiff example of Pope and his school, and although there was a growing tendency to give more freedom and flexibility to poetic utterance, Dr. Johnson still adhered to the old classical manner, and Goldsmith was too good a friend and pupil even to dream of setting himself up above the master. Moreover, in the dedication to *The Traveller*, Goldsmith goes so far as to say, “What criticisms have we not heard of late in favor of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence; every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.” And yet Goldsmith’s meter is, to an extent, distinctive. Fully as conventional as that of Pope, it is less metallic and monotonous, for variety in rhythm is secured by means of the substitution of trochees for the regular iambics, occasional stresses on the lighter syllables, pleasing vowel combinations and graceful consonant effects,—devices of versification that betoken the poetic gift rather than the rhyming knack.

## THE TRAVELLER

**Composition and Publication.**—*The Traveller* was begun—so its dedication to Henry Goldsmith tells us—when the author was sojourning in Switzerland, some time in the year 1756. The poem was not completed and given to the public, however, till December 19, 1764; and

possibly it would never have appeared but for the unstinted praise of Johnson, to whom Goldsmith submitted it for critical judgment. The great doctor championed its worth in *The Critical Review*, then the chief literary organ of the day, declaring it "the finest poem since the day of Pope." Although *The Traveller* won notice and praise in literary circles, which at first could scarcely credit the "bookseller's drudge" with its authorship, it did not immediately become widely known or popular. However, during the first year of its publication, three editions besides the first were struck off the plates of Newberry; and before Goldsmith's death in 1774 the ninth had been published. Irving says, "It produced a golden harvest to Mr. Newberry: but all the remuneration on record, doled out by his niggard hand to the author, was twenty guineas!"

**Opinions of the Poet's Friends.**—The following conversation respecting *The Traveller* is reported by Boswell as having taken place at a dinner party given at the home of Sir Joshua Reynolds a few years after Goldsmith's death. The talk drifting around to Goldsmith, somebody remarked that *The Traveller* had brought its author into high reputation.

Bennet Langton: "Yes, and no wonder: there is not one bad line in the poem, not one of Dryden's careless verses." Sir Joshua Reynolds: "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say it was one of the finest poems in the language." Hereupon Dr. Johnson broke in. "No: the merit of *The Traveller* is so well established that Mr. Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it. Goldsmith was a man who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey, and every year he lived he would have deserved it better."

A delicate tribute to the beauty of *The Traveller* was

paid by Sir Joshua Reynolds' sister, who, after listening to a reading of the poem, exclaimed: "Well, I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly."

**Purpose and Plan.**—The ethical purpose of *The Traveller* is to reconcile man with his station in life, whatever it may be. According to the poet, happiness is evenly distributed among all nations, though its expression differs under differing conditions. To apply this theory concretely, the poet takes up a point on an Alpine height, and passes in review the leading characteristics of the countries through which he has journeyed. Whatever the virtue of a particular land, that virtue, it is observed, usually runs into excess and brings evil in its wake. After a comparison of class with class, and condition with condition, Goldsmith finally reaches the conclusion that happiness is a state of the mind and is to be had by all alike.

**Models.**—A critical examination of *The Traveller* reveals Goldsmith's indebtedness, especially as regards material, to other poets of, and before, his day,—notably to Joseph Addison, James Thomson, and Dr. Samuel Johnson. It is clear that Goldsmith knew and admired Addison's *Letter from Italy*, published in 1701. There are also traces of the influence of Dr. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, published in 1749, particularly in the didactic parts of *The Traveller*. Goldsmith's chief debt, however, was to James Thomson's *Liberty*, as Dr. Tupper has plainly established. "Thomson had pointed out the evils arising from various forms of Government; Goldsmith recalled his words when he painted the faults of each race and clime. Later when he wished to portray in *The Deserted Village* the sad results of trade and luxury, he turned again to Thomson,—the fifth canto indeed furnishing the design of many golden verses." Not that Goldsmith was a servile copyist; he sorted and sifted

the material that appealed to his purpose and encased it in a marvelous beauty of phrase.

**Critical Estimate.**—As a final opinion of *The Traveller* Prof. Dowden's words are worth recalling: "None except Goldsmith knew how to unite such various elements into a delightful whole,—description, reflecting mirth, sadness, memory and love. No one like Goldsmith could pass so tranquilly from grave to gay, still preserving the delicate harmony of tone. No one like Goldsmith knew how to be at once natural and exquisite, innocent and wise, a man and still a child!"

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

**Composition and Publication.**—*The Public Advertiser* of May 26, 1770, contains this announcement: "This day, at twelve, will be published, price two shillings, *The Deserted Village, a Poem*. By Dr. Goldsmith. Printed for W. Griffin, at Garrick's Head in Catherine Street, Strand." This date was five years after the appearance of *The Traveller*. *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Good Natured Man*, which had come from Goldsmith's pen during this period, had made their author a person of literary consequence. Thus the new poem made its bid for favor at an auspicious moment. It became popular immediately, five editions being issued within three months after its publication; and praise came from all quarters: "A fine performance," said Dr. Johnson. "This man is a poet," asserted Thomas Gray. "What true and pretty pastoral images! they beat all—Pope, and Philips, and Spenser too, in my opinion," declared Edmund Burke.

**Purpose.**—The central idea of *The Deserted Village* is a lament over the decay of the small farmers, and an invective against the spreading power of the landed class—

“luxury,” the poet says. This was no new idea with Goldsmith; in *The Traveller*, lines 397–412, and in many of his contributions to *The Citizen of the World*, the same thought is touched upon.

**Spirit of Progress.**—Goldsmith’s intensity in championing in verse the cause of the small farmers is made clear by an analysis of the agricultural conditions in England during and before the eighteenth century. Agriculture during the eighteenth century reflected the progressive spirit of the times. A more systematic rotation of crops was practiced before 1750; many agricultural implements were invented; the native breeds of cattle and sheep were improved by importations; and there was some attempt at a scientific analysis of the soil. In short, farming began to be carried on with a growing intelligence.

**Interest of the Wealthy in Agriculture.**—“The peculiar excellence of the agriculture of this period,” says Lecky, the historian, “sprang mainly from the fact that the ownership and control of land were chiefly in the hands of a wealthy, and not of a needy, class; and a large number of great gentleman farmers led the way in all the paths of progress.” The small farmer, unable, by reason of his lack of capital, to keep pace with the rich estate-owner, was gradually turned into a wage-earning laborer, forced often to try his hand at making a living otherwise than by tilling the soil.

**Status of the Peasantry.**—In certain respects the status of the laborers during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century was far from being so deplorable as it later became. Wages were steady and employment plentiful; wheat bread was an article of daily consumption; and animal food was not out of reach. On the other hand, the densest ignorance prevailed; there was scarcely such a thing as skilled labor, and the peasants

lived in the greatest squalor despite philanthropic and legislative action to improve their condition.

**The Corn Laws.**—The “Corn Laws” is the name given in England to the long series of statutes dating as far back as the reign of Edward III and terminating as late as 1846, when, largely through the statesmanship and eloquence of Sir Robert Peel, they were repealed. The object of these laws was to regulate the trade in grain. “Their tenor varied with the idea uppermost in the minds of the legislators.” At first they prohibited the exportation of grain stuffs. Later, however, this policy was abandoned, and the exportation of wheat and corn at a fixed price per quarter was permitted, though importation was restrained by heavy duties. A third change came about at the Revolution; the scheme of importation was not altered, but exportation was not only allowed, but even fostered by the bestowal of subsidies upon the estate-owners, the theory being that in this way “a new impulse would be given to tillage, and that the price of wheat would be made both steadier and lower.” Notwithstanding this legislation, toward the end of the eighteenth century England practically ceased to export grain of any kind, and by the act of 1773 foreign wheat was admitted at the very liberal tax of six-pence a quarter.

**The Enclosure Bills.**—The “Enclosure Bills” were a result of the special efforts made during the latter half of the eighteenth century to bring as much land as possible under cultivation. It is estimated that as late as 1800 there were in England nearly 8,000,000 acres of what was usually called “common land.” Much of this immense area was waste or poorly tilled; the problem was to reclaim it and to increase its productivity. According to English law such land belonged to the estate-owner, though the small farmers had certain well-defined

rights on it, among which were "rights of pasture, rights of cutting wood and turf, and also rights of cultivation." These lands were tenanted not only by freeholders, but by tramps, wandering beggars, gypsies, and similar classes, who felt that, by reason of long or occasional occupancy, they had just claims to a part of this acreage. Such an economic situation naturally resulted in legislation to determine the rightful ownership of the land. A new era did not dawn until 1773 when a general act, the first "Enclosure Bill," was passed "for the better cultivation, improvement and regulation of the common arable fields, wastes and commons of pasture in the kingdom." To the same end, there were passed from the accession of George III in 1760 till 1796 over one thousand enclosure acts, whereby nearly 3,000,000 acres of common land were added to the holdings of the estate owners. That such an agrarian policy was necessary and highly beneficent to England as a whole, is the opinion of all economists and historians.

**Goldsmith's Economic Theory.**—*The Deserted Village*, then, is a partial picture of the changing agricultural conditions of the eighteenth century. Criticism has made much of Goldsmith's warping of fact and narrowness of view in the selection and the treatment of the material of this poem—charges that are, in a measure, true. The poet's wail over the rapid shrinking away of the small farmers was certainly uncalled for, statistics proving that England increased in population nearly 1,000,000 from 1700 till 1750, and over 3,000,000 from the latter date till 1800. Again, the steady stream of emigration to foreign lands and especially to America, to Goldsmith meant only the gradual wiping out of the small farmers. And to the many strictures in the poem on wealth and luxury, almost all political economists have taken exception, charging the poet with being blind to the far-reaching benefits of trade and commerce. In brief, Gold-



smith's sympathies and imagination were stirred as much by the fancied, as by the real, hardships of the soil tillers; the concrete type or instance, not the general economic trend, was the thing that fired his heart and pen.

On the other hand, highly colored as some of his pictures doubtless are, there is plenty of evidence that both in England and in Ireland the wholesale eviction of the peasantry, even if legal and necessary, was the cause of much misery. It seems to be true that "whole villages which had depended on free pasture land and fuel, dwindled and perished." And William Black says in his *Life of Goldsmith*, "It is within the last twenty years that an English landlord, having faith in his riches, bade a village to be removed and cast elsewhere, so that it should no longer be visible from his window, and it was forthwith removed." After all, the soundness or the lack of soundness of Goldsmith's economic theories is not such a very important matter, for the province of poetry is only incidentally concerned with the transcription of actual fact.

**The Location of Auburn.**—Many literary critics, among them Dr. Strean, rector of Kilkenny West during the early years of the nineteenth century, hold that Auburn is the Lissoy of the poet's youth. If one must be literal and prosaic, it is possible, at least in essential respects, to make this identification. The saner viewpoint, however, is that *The Deserted Village*, though it doubtless records many of the poet's impressions and memories of the home of his youth, is in a larger way the creation of his own fancy, and is located, therefore, "nowhere, but everywhere." Certainly the poem portrays English as well as Irish rural life, despite Macaulay's overdrawn contention on this point. "It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days, is a true English village. The village in its decay, is an Irish village. The happiness and the misery which Gold-

smith has brought close together, belong to two different countries and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content and tranquillity as his Auburn. He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day, and forced to emigrate in a body to America." The picture is merely that of any village in its weal and in its woe. This very simplicity of plan and indefiniteness of location widen and intensify its human interest.

**Critical Estimate.**— The following sentence from a concise and liberal estimate of Goldsmith by L. DuPont Syle admirably sums up the appeal of *The Deserted Village* to most lovers of poetry. "We do not read *The Deserted Village* for its political economy: we read it for its idyllic sweetness; for its portraits of the village preacher, of the village schoolmaster, of the country inn; for its pathetic description of the poor emigrants; for the tender and noble feeling with which Goldsmith closes the poem in his farewell to poetry."

## THE TRAVELLER

### DEDICATION TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH

DEAR SIR,

I AM sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favour once shown to her, and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes,

choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous, I mean Party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes, ever after, the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet; his tawdry lampoons are called satires, his turbulence is said to be force, and his phrenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to show that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own, that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge, better than yourself, how far these positions are illustrated in this poem.

I am, dear Sir,  
Your most affectionate Brother,  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

## THE TRAVELLER

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,  
 Or by the lazy Scheldt or wandering Po;  
 Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor  
 Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;  
 Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies, 5  
 A weary waste expanding to the skies;  
 Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
 My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee;  
 Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,  
 And drags at each remove a lengthening chain. 10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,  
 And round his dwelling guardian saints attend!  
 Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire  
 To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire;  
 Blest that abode where want and pain repair, 15  
 And every stranger finds a ready chair;  
 Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned,  
 Where all the ruddy family around  
 Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,  
 Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale; 20  
 Or press the bashful stranger to his food,  
 And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to share,  
 My prime of life in wandering spent, and care;  
 Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue 25  
 Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;

2. or — or: either — or.

8. thee: Henry Goldsmith, the poet's elder brother.

15. repair: go.

23. me: Object of "leads" in line 29.

That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
 And find no spot of all the world my own. 30

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,  
 I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;  
 And placed on high above the storm's career,  
 Look downward where an hundred realms appear;  
 Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide, 35  
 The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,  
 Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?  
 Say, should the philosophic mind disdain  
 That good which makes each humbler bosom vain? 40  
 Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,  
 These little things are great to little man;  
 And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind  
 Exults in all the good of all mankind.  
 Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendor  
 crowned; 45

Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;  
 Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;  
 Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale;  
 For me your tributary stores combine:  
 Creation's heir, the world, the world, is mine! 50

As some lone miser visiting his store,  
 Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;  
 Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,  
 Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still;  
 Thus to my breast alternate passions rise, 55  
 Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies:

30. *And*: Infinitive with the preposition (to) omitted.

32. *sit me down*: Reflexive use of the personal pronoun; uncommon to-day.

34. *an*: a.

48. *swains*: peasants.—*dress*: till.

Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,  
 To see the hoard of human bliss so small;  
 And oft I wish amidst the scene to find  
 Some spot to real happiness consigned, 60  
 Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,  
 May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.

But where to find that happiest spot below,  
 Who can direct, when all pretend to know?  
 The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone 65  
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;  
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,  
 And his long nights of revelry and ease:  
 The naked negro, panting at the line,  
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70  
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,  
 And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.

Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam;  
 His first, best country ever is at home.  
 And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare, 75  
 And estimate the blessings which they share,  
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find  
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind;  
 As different good, by art or nature given,  
 To different nations makes their blessings even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,  
 Still grants her bliss at labor's earnest call;  
 With food as well the peasant is supplied  
 On Idra's cliff as Arno's shelvy side;  
 And though the rocky-crested summits frown, 85  
 These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.

57. **sorrows:** signs of sorrow, lamentations.

70. **palmy:** fermented from the sap of the palm.

77. **shall:** Simple futurity would be expressed by will.

83. **as well:** Notice the position.

84. **shelvy side:** sloping bank.

86. **custom:** use.

From art more various are the blessings sent,—  
 Wealth, commerce, honor, liberty, content.  
 Yet these each other's power so strong contest,  
 That either seems destructive of the rest. 90  
 Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,  
 And honor sinks where commerce long prevails.  
 Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,  
 Conforms and models life to that alone.  
 Each to the favorite happiness attends, 95  
 And spurns the plan that aims at other ends;  
 Till, carried to excess in each domain,  
 This favorite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,  
 And trace them through the prospect as it lies: 100  
 Here for a while my proper cares resigned,  
 Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;  
 Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,  
 That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends, 105  
 Bright as the summer, Italy extends:  
 Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,  
 Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;  
 While oft some temple's mouldering tops between  
 With venerable grandeur mark the scene. 110

Could nature's bounty satisfy the breast,  
 The sons of Italy were surely blest.  
 Whatever fruits in different climes are found,  
 That proudly rise or humbly court the ground;

93. **prone:** The usual unfavorable sense is not connoted. The meaning is merely "inclined."

98. **peculiar pain:** pain of a particular kind or peculiar to itself.

99. **try:** examine, a somewhat rare use of the word.

101. **my proper cares:** cares of especial significance to Goldsmith.

109. **between:** Supply the ellipsis.

112. **were surely blest:** Explain the mood and the tense.



Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear, 115  
 Whose bright succession decks the varied year;  
 Whatever sweets salute the northern sky  
 With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;  
 These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,  
 Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil; 120  
 While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand  
 To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,  
 And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.  
 In florid beauty groves and fields appear; 125  
 Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.  
 Contrasted faults through all his manners reign:  
 Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;  
 Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;  
 And even in penance planning sins anew. 130  
 All evils here contaminate the mind  
 That opulence departed leaves behind;  
 For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date,  
 When commerce proudly flourished through the state;  
 At her command the palace learned to rise, 135  
 Again the long-fallen column sought the skies,  
 The canvas glowed, beyond e'en nature warm,  
 The pregnant quarry teemed with human form;  
 Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,  
 Commerce on other shores displayed her sail; 140  
 While nought remained of all that riches gave,  
 But towns unmanned, and lords without a slave:  
 And late the nation found with fruitless skill

119. **kindred soil:** soil of the same sort as that of the native land.

121. **gelid:** cool.

125. **florid:** luxuriant.

142. **unmanned:** Used in its etymological sense of depopulated.

143. **skill:** knowledge.

Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied 145

By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;

From these the feeble heart and long-fallen mind

An easy compensation seem to find.

Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp arrayed,

The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade, 150

Processions formed for piety and love,

A mistress or a saint in every grove.

By sports like these are all their cares beguiled;

The sports of children satisfy the child.

Each nobler aim, repressed by long control, 155

Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;

While low delights, succeeding fast behind,

In happier meanness occupy the mind:

As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,

Defaced by time and tottering in decay, 160

There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,

The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;

And, wondering man could want the larger pile,

Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey 165

Where rougher climes a nobler race display,

Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,

And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.

No product here the barren hills afford

But man and steel, the soldier and his sword; 170

No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,

But winter lingering chills the lap of May;

No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,

But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet still, even here, content can spread a charm, 175

144. **plethoric**: swollen.

159. **domes**: palace.

163. **pile**: a massive edifice.

170. **man and steel**: armed soldiery.

Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.  
 Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,  
 He sees his little lot the lot of all;  
 Sees no contiguous palace rear its head  
 To shame the meanness of his humble shed; 180  
 No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal  
 To make him loathe his vegetable meal;  
 But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,  
 Each wish contracting fits him to the soil.  
 Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose, 185  
 Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes;  
 With patient angle trolls the finny deep;  
 Or drives his venturous plough-share to the steep;  
 Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,  
 And drags the struggling savage into day. 190  
 At night returning, every labor sped,  
 He sits him down the monarch of a shed;  
 Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys  
 His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;  
 While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard, 195  
 Displays her cleanly platter on the board:  
 And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,  
 With many a tale repays the nightly bed.  
 Thus every good his native wilds impart,  
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart; 200  
 And e'en those ills that round his mansion rise  
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.  
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,  
 And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;

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176. **Redress:** compensate for.

181. **deal:** To be construed with "sees," understood.

190. **savage:** wild beast, an unusual use of the word.

191. **sped:** performed.

197. **haply:** perhaps.

198. **nightly:** of, or pertaining to, the night.

202. **supplies:** The object is "that," understood.

And as a child, when scaring sounds molest, 205  
 Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,  
 So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar  
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assigned;  
 Their wants but few, their wishes all confined. 210  
 Yet let them only share the praises due:  
 If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;  
 For every want that stimulates the breast  
 Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.  
 Hence from such lands each pleasing science flies - 215  
 That first excites desire, and then supplies;  
 Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,  
 To fill the languid pause with finer joy;  
 Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,  
 Catch every nerve and vibrate through the frame. 220  
 Their level life is but a smouldering fire,  
 Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire;  
 Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer  
 On some high festival of once a year,  
 In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire, 225  
 Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow:  
 Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;  
 For, as refinement stops, from sire to son  
 Unaltered, unimproved, the manners run, 230  
 And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart  
 Fall blunted from each indurated heart.

214. redrest: supplied.

215. science: knowledge.

216. supplies: satisfies. "Desire" is the object of both "excites" and "supplies."

217. Unknown: Note the ellipsis. The meaning is, "They know not how."

221. level: monotonous, unchanging.

226. expire: Explain the mood.

228. morals: manners.

Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast  
 May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest;  
 But all the gentler morals, such as play 235  
 Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the  
     way,

These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,  
 To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,  
 I turn; and France displays her bright domain. 240  
 Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,  
 Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,  
 How often have I led thy sportive choir,  
 With tuneless pipe beside the murmuring Loire!  
 Where shading elms along the margin grew, 245  
 And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew;  
 And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,  
 But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill;  
 Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,  
 And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour. 250  
 Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days  
 Have led their children through the mirthful maze,  
 And the gay grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,  
 Has frisked beneath the burden of threescore.

So blessed a life these thoughtless realms  
     display; 255  
 Thus idly busy rolls their world away.  
 Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,  
 For honor forms the social temper here:  
 Honor, that praise which real merit gains,  
 Or even imaginary worth obtains, 260  
 Here passes current: paid from hand to hand,  
 It shifts in splendid traffic round the land:

234. **cowering**: bending or crouching. Fear is not implied.

255. **thoughtless**: free from the necessity of taking thought for their welfare. The word is not used in its modern sense of heedless.

From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,  
 And all are taught an avarice of praise.  
 They please, are pleased; they give to get esteem; 265  
 Till, seeming blessed, they grow to what they seem.

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,  
 It gives their follies also room to rise;  
 For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,  
 Enfeebles all internal strength of thought, 270  
 And the weak soul within itself unblest,  
 Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.  
 Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,  
 Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;  
 Here vanity assumes her pert grimace, 275  
 And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace;  
 Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,  
 To boast one splendid banquet once a year;  
 The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,  
 Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause. 280

To men of other minds my fancy flies,  
 Embosomed in the deep where Holland lies.  
 Methinks her patient sons before me stand,  
 Where the broad ocean leans against the land;  
 And, sedulous to stop the coming tide, 285  
 Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.  
 Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,  
 The firm connected bulwark seems to grow;  
 Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,  
 Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore: 290  
 While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,  
 Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;  
 The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,  
 The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,

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273. **tawdry**: gaudy.

277. **cheer**: fare.

283. **Methinks**: Poetic for, I think.

286. **rampire**: Obsolete variant for rampart.

The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,— 295  
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus while around the wave-subjected soil  
Impels the native to repeated toil,  
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,  
And industry begets a love of gain. 300  
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,  
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,  
Are here displayed. There much-loved wealth  
imparts

Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;  
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear, 305  
E'en liberty itself is bartered here.  
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;  
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;  
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,  
Here wretches seek dishonorable graves, 310  
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,  
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.  
Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires of old!  
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold,  
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow: 315  
How much unlike the sons of Britain now!

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,  
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;  
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,  
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide. 320  
There all around the gentlest breezes stray;  
There gentle music melts on every spray;  
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,  
Extremes are only in the master's mind!  
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state, 325

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297. **wave-subjected:** This epithet means "subject to inundation"; perhaps, too, "lying under the surface of the sea."

311. **bent:** That is, to the yoke of servitude.

317. **genius:** guiding spirit or poetic muse.

With daring aims irregularly great;  
 Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
 I see the lords of human kind pass by;  
 Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,  
 By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand, 330  
 Fierce in their native hardness of soul,  
 True to imagined right, above control,  
 While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,  
 And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured  
 here; 335

Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear;  
 Too blessed, indeed, were such without alloy:  
 But fostered even by freedom ills annoy:  
 That independence Britons prize too high  
 Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie; 340  
 The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,  
 All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.  
 Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,  
 Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled;  
 Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar, 345  
 Repressed ambition struggles round her shore,  
 Till, overwrought, the general system feels  
 Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,  
 As duty, love, and honor fail to sway, 350  
 Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,  
 Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.  
 Hence all obedience bows to these alone,  
 And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown: 354

327. **port:** bearing.

332. **imagined right:** right that the lords of human kind imagine belongs to them.

345. **Ferments:** political disturbances.—**imprisoned:** confined within the pale of law.

351. **Fictitious:** factitious, artificial.



Till time may come, when, stripped of all her charms,  
 The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,  
 Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,  
 Where kings have toiled and poets wrote for fame,  
 One sink of level avarice shall lie,  
 And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonored die. 360

Yet think not, thus when freedom's ills I state,  
 I mean to flatter kings, or court the great.  
 Ye powers of truth that bid my soul aspire;  
 Far from my bosom drive the low desire!  
 And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel 365  
 The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel;  
 Thou transitory flower, alike undone  
 By proud contempt or favor's fostering sun,  
 Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!  
 I only would repress them to secure: 370  
 For just experience tells, in every soil,  
 That those who think must govern those that toil;  
 And all that freedom's highest aims can reach  
 Is but to lay proportioned loads on each.  
 Hence, should one order disproportioned grow, 375  
 Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,  
 Who think it freedom when a part aspires!  
 Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,  
 Except when fast approaching danger warns; 380  
 But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,  
 Contracting regal power to stretch their own,  
 When I behold a factious band agree  
 To call it freedom when themselves are free;  
 Each wanton judge new penal statues draw, 385  
 Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law,

357. **noble stems:** influential families.

358. **wrote:** Obsolete past participle of write.

370. **to secure:** Infinitive of purpose. "Them" is to be understood as the object.

The wealth of climes where savage nations roam  
 Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home;  
 Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,  
 Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart; 390  
 Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,  
 I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour  
 When first ambition struck at regal power;  
 And thus polluting honor in its source, 395  
 Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.  
 Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,  
 Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore,  
 Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,  
 Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste? 400  
 Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,  
 Lead stern depopulation in her train,  
 And over fields where scattered hamlets rose  
 In barren solitary pomp repose?  
 Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call 405  
 The smiling long-frequented village fall?  
 Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,  
 The modest matron, and the blushing maid,  
 Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,  
 To traverse climes beyond the western main; 410  
 Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,  
 And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays  
 Through tangled forests and through dangerous ways,  
 Where beasts with man divided empire claim, 415  
 And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;  
 There, while above the giddy tempest flies,

399. **destruction:** The direct object of "haste."

401. **Seen:** An ellipsis. Supply, "Have we not?"

406. **smiling:** happy and prosperous; perhaps the idea of natural beauty of location is also implied.

407. **duteous:** dutiful.

And all around distressful yells arise,  
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,  
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420  
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,  
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find  
That bliss which only centres in the mind.  
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose, 425  
To seek a good each government bestows?

In every government, though terrors reign,  
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,  
How small, of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure! 430  
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,  
Our own felicity we make or find:

With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,  
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.  
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel, 435  
Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,  
To men remote from power but rarely known,  
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

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437. **but rarely known:** An adjective phrase to be taken with  
"The lifted ax," "The agonizing wheel," etc., the subjects of  
"leave."

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

### DEDICATION TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR,

I CAN have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this Poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to enquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion), that the depopulation it deplures is no where to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and enquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an enquiry, whether the country be depopulating, or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect

the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states, by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, Dear Sir,  
Your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,  
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm,  
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,  
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
How often have I blest the coming day, 15  
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labour free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,

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2. swain: See note on line 48 of *The Traveller*.

4. parting: departing.

5. bowers: Poetic for unpretentious dwellings; cottages. A favorite word with Goldsmith.

6. Seats: abodes.

10. cot: cottage, the original meaning of the word.

12. decent: Used in its root sense of becoming or attractive (Latin *decens*). "Decent" is still used in this sense in many parts of Scotland.

15. coming day: holiday.

16. remitting: ceasing now and then.

17. train: group, class.

18. Led up: arranged.

The young contending as the old surveyed; 20  
 And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,  
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.  
 And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,  
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;  
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25  
 By holding out to tire each other down;  
 The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,  
 While secret laughter tittered round the place;  
 The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,  
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove. 30  
 These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,  
 With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;  
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed:  
 These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.  
 Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35  
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;  
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
 And desolation saddens all thy green:  
 One only master grasps the whole domain,  
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40  
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
 But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;  
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;

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21. **gambol frolicked:** running about in a frolicsome manner.

22. **sleights of art:** clever tricks.

23. **still:** habitually, always.

25. **simply:** artlessly.

27. **mistrustless of:** not suspecting.

29. **virgin:** girl.

35. **lawn:** an expanse of meadow.

39. **only master:** sole master; "only" is used in the adjectival sense.

40. **stints thy smiling plain:** deprives of beauty and fruitfulness.

43. **glades:** The usual meaning of this word is an open space

Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45  
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;  
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;  
 And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
 Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made:  
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55  
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
 When every rood of ground maintained its man;  
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
 Just gave what life required, but gave no more: 60  
 His best companions, innocence and health;  
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train  
 Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;  
 Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose, 65  
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,  
 And every want to opulence allied,  
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
 These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
 Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70  
 Those healthful sports that graced the graceful scene,

in a wood or forest, either natural, or artificially made. Here glade seems to be almost equivalent to everglade, a low-lying, marshy expanse of country.

45. **walks:** range, region.—**lapwing:** A bird of the plover type, sometimes called the pewit from its cry.

52. **decay:** grow fewer in number.

58. **rood:** The fourth part of a statute acre, equal to about 40 square rods. The meaning here, however, is not literal.

60. **Just:** To be contented with "what life required."

67–68. The verb "repose" is understood.



Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;  
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour, 75  
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds

Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,  
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80  
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
 In all my griefs — and God has given my share —  
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85

Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
 To husband out life's taper at the close,  
 And keep the flame from wasting, by repose:  
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill, 90  
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;

And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue,  
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95  
 Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
 Retreats from care, that never must be mine,

74. **manners:** customs.

76. **confess:** display, betoken.

81. **busy train:** crowding recollections of the past.

85. **latest:** last.

88. **by repose:** Modifies "keep."

93. **whom:** which.

94. **from whence:** whence.

98. **Retreats:** In the same case as "retirement" in line 96.—  
**never must be.** never can be; destined never to be.

How happy is he who crowns in shades like these,  
 A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100  
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!  
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
 No surly porter stands in guilty state 105  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend;  
 Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,  
 While resignation gently slopes the way; 110  
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
 His heaven commences ere the world be past!  
 Sweet was the sound, when oft, at evening's close,  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.  
 There, as I passed with careless steps and slow, 115  
 The mingling notes came softened from below;  
 The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,  
 The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
 The playful children just let loose from school, 120  
 The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,  
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;—  
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
 And filled each pause the nightingale had made.  
 But now the sounds of population fail, 125  
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
 No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,

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100. **age:** old age.

107. **latter end:** death; a Biblical phrase.

111. **prospects:** anticipations.

115. **careless:** free from care.

122. **vacant mind:** the mind that has cast off care.

126. **fluctuate in the gale:** "Float on the breeze."

But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.

All but yon widowed, solitary thing,  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring; 130  
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;  
She only left of all the harmless train, 135  
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;  
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;  
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train;  
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain: 150  
The long remembered beggar was his guest,  
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;

128. **bloomy:** blooming.

130. **plashy:** full of puddles.

132. **mantling cresses:** cresses so thickly intergrown that the surface of the water appeared like a mantle.

136. **pensive:** reflective and sad.

137. **copse:** a thicket of shrubbery or small trees.

139. **disclose:** mark, indicate.

140. **mansion:** dwelling, abode usually one of some pretensions.

142. **passing rich:** surpassingly rich.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155  
 Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,  
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,  
 Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.  
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,  
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
 And even his failings leaned to virtue's side:  
 But in his duty prompt at every call, 165  
 He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;  
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
 To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,  
 The reverend champion stood. At his control  
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175  
 And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
 His looks adorned the venerable place;  
 Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
 And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray; 180  
 The service past, around the pious man,  
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
 Even children followed with endearing wile,

155. **bade:** Obsolete past participle of bid; the usual form to-day is "bidden."

159. **to glow:** to kindle with enthusiasm.

161. **Careless:** To be taken with "good man," the understood subject of "gave" in line 162.

171. **parting:** See note on line 4.

172. **dismayed:** The object is "dying person," understood.

And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.  
 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest, 185  
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.  
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190  
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
 With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,  
 There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule, 195  
 The village master taught his little school.  
 A man severe he was, and stern to view;  
 I knew him well, and every truant knew:  
 Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace  
 The day's disasters in his morning face; 200  
 Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee  
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;  
 Full well the busy whisper circling round  
 Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.  
 Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205  
 The love he bore to learning was in fault;  
 The village all declared how much he knew.  
 'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;  
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
 And even the story ran that he could gauge. 210  
 In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,  
 For, even though vanquished, he could argue still;  
 While words of learned length and thundering sound  
 Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;  
 And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew, 215

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189. **awful**: The strictly correct use of this much abused adjective.

210. **gauge**: To measure the capacity of casks. Recall Burns's duties as an exciseman.

That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot  
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.  
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220  
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,  
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,  
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round.  
Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225

The parlour splendours of that festive place:  
The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,  
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;  
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230  
The pictures placed for ornament and use,  
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;  
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,  
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;  
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show, 235  
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain, transitory splendours! could not all  
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240  
Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;  
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,

218. **forgot:** Forgotten is the preferable form of the past participle, at least in prose.

219. **thorn:** hawthorn.

229. **contrived:** Past participle.

236. **Ranged:** Participle. "Glistened" is the main verb.—  
**chimney:** fireplace, a common meaning of the word in Goldsmith's time.

239. **Obscure it sinks:** its decay attracts little heed.

241. **repair:** See note on line 15 of *The Traveller*.

No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;  
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245  
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;  
 The host himself no longer shall be found  
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;  
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,  
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
 These simple blessings of the lowly train;  
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art;  
 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play, 255  
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;  
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.  
 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
 With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,— 260  
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;  
 And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
 The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey 265  
 The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,  
 'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand  
 Between a splendid and an happy land.  
 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
 And shouting folly hails them from her shore; 270

248. **mantling bliss**: foaming ale.

253. **congenial**: "More" is to be understood before congenial.

254. **charm**: Subject of "is" to be supplied.—**native**: natural.

256. **owns**: grants.

257. **vacant**: Cf. note on line 122.

259. **pomp**: procession.

267. **'Tis yours**: it is your duty.

268. **splendid**: The correct use of this over-used adjective.

269. **freighted**: "loaded for shipment."

Hoards, even beyond the miser's wish abound,  
 And rich men flock from all the world around.  
 Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name  
 That leaves our useful products still the same.  
 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275  
 Takes up a space that many poor supplied;  
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;  
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth,  
 Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their  
 growth; 280

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,  
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;  
 Around the world each needful product flies,  
 For all the luxuries the world supplies;  
 While thus the land, adorned for pleasure, all 285  
 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,  
 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
 Slight every borrowed charm that dress supplies,  
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; 290  
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,  
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,  
 In all the glaring impotence of dress.  
 Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed, 295  
 In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed;  
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,  
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;  
 While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,

281. seat: See note on line 6.

285. all: wholly.

288. Secure to please: confident of pleasing.

293. solicitous to bless: eager to attract.

298. strike: impress strongly.



The mournful peasant leads his humble band, 300  
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
 The country blooms,— a garden and a grave.

Where, then, ah! where shall poverty reside,  
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
 If to some common's fenceless limits strayed 305  
 His drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there?  
 To see profusion that he must not share; 310  
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined  
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;  
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.

Here while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315  
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;  
 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
 There the black gibbet glooms besides the way.  
 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,  
 Here, richly decked, amidst the gorgeous train: 320  
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.  
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!  
 Sure these denote one universal joy!

300. **band:** family.

304. **contiguous pride:** See note on line 14.

308. **bare-worn common:** See Introduction.

310. **must:** See note on line 97.

316. **artist:** artizan or mechanic, a use of the word common in Goldsmith's day, but obsolete now.— **sickly trade:** unremunerative occupation. Cf. line 389.

317. **pomps:** Consult note on line 259.

319. **dome:** The Latin *domus*, poetical here for palace. See *The Traveller*, line 159.

322. **chariots:** Generic for carriages.

323. **Sure:** surely.

Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah! turn thine  
eyes 325

Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn: 330  
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,  
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,  
When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335  
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn,— thine, the loveliest train,—  
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?

Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! 340

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,  
Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.  
Far different there from all that charmed before, 345

The various terrors of that horrid shore;  
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
And fiercely shed intolerable day;  
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,  
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 350  
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,  
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;  
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;

342. **convex**: curved; often used by the Latin poets to qualify world (*mundus*).

346. **horrid**: horror-arousing, the correct use of the word.

352. **death**: venom.

Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355  
 And savage men more murderous still than they;  
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
 Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.  
 Far different these from every former scene,  
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
 That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting  
 day,

That called them from their native walks away;  
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365  
 Hung round their bowers, and fondly looked their last,  
 And took a long farewell, and wished in vain  
 For seats like these beyond the western main,  
 And shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
 Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 370  
 The good old sire the first prepared to go  
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;  
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave  
 He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.  
 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375  
 The fond companion of his helpless years,  
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.  
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,  
 And blest the cot where every pleasure rose, 380  
 And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,

355. **hapless:** unlucky.

362. **only:** To be construed with "thefts."

364. **them:** A pronoun anticipating its antecedent, "exiles"  
 in line 365.

379. **plaints:** complaints.

380. **cot:** See note on line 10.

381. **thoughtless:** unthinking. See note on line 255 of *The Traveller*.

And clasped them close in sorrow doubly dear,  
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385  
 How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!  
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,  
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!  
 Kingdoms by thee to sickly greatness grown,  
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own. 390  
 At every draught more large and large they grow,  
 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;  
 Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,  
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun 395  
 And half the business of destruction done;  
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
 I see the rural virtues leave the land.  
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,  
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400  
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,  
 And kind connubial tenderness are there;  
 And piety with wishes placed above, 405  
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.  
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;  
 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame  
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame; 410  
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;

389. *sickly*: Cf. line 316 of *The Deserted Village*, and line 144 of *The Traveller*.

397. *methinks*: See note on line 283 of *The Traveller*.

399. *anchoring*: lying at anchor.

412. *my solitary pride*: The poet's pride when by himself.

Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,  
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;  
 Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415  
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!  
 Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,  
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,  
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420  
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
 Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;  
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;  
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;  
 Teach him that states, of native strength possess, 425  
 Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;  
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
 As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;  
 While self-dependent power can time defy,  
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

419. **fervours:** heat.

422. **Redress:** See note on line 176 of *The Traveller*.

425. **of:** To be taken with "possess."

428. **mole:** breakwater or pier.

## NOTES

### THE TRAVELLER

Cf.= compare. l.= line. ll.= lines.

1. The adjectives composing this line foretell and reflect the spirit of the entire poem. The note struck is at once personal and pathetic; the poet is keenly aware that he is an aimless wanderer in a strange land, with loved ones and familiar scenes far away. William Black, in his *Goldsmith, English Men of Letters Series*, 71, speaks of this verse as pervaded by a "pathetic thrill of distance and regret and longing." — **slow**: Boswell, the garrulous biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson, records concerning this word an interesting conversation in which Dr. Johnson, Chamier and Goldsmith are reported to have taken part. Chamier asked Goldsmith if by "slow" he meant "tardiness of locomotion." The latter's unthinking reply was that he did. At this point Dr. Johnson broke in, "No, sir; you do not mean 'tardiness of locomotion'; you mean that sluggishness of mind that comes upon a man in solitude." Chamier ever afterward believed Dr. Johnson to have been the author of the first line of *The Traveller*.

2. **Or**: Poetic for either. Cf.

"Tell me, where is fancy bred,

Or in the heart, or in the head?"

Shak., *The Merchant of Venice*, III., 2, 64.—**Scheldt**: A river rising in France, and flowing north into Belgium and then northeast to the city of Antwerp, near which it merges with the southernmost arm of the Rhine delta.—**wandering Po**: The largest river of Italy; it rises in the Cottian Alps, flows east through Piedmont and Lombardy, and after a course of about 400 miles in length, empties into the Adriatic Sea. Its course is irregular, winding, and throughout the last 200 miles sluggish; hence the aptness of the epithet, "wandering."

3. **the rude Carinthian boor**: Carinthia is a crownland and duchy of Hungary in western Austria; its chief city and capital is Klagenfurth, now containing about 25,000 inhabitants. This province has long been noted for its lumber, mineral and horses.

Goldsmith is supposed to have visited Carinthia in the course of his European wanderings, probably in the year 1755.

4. According to Prior, *Life of Goldsmith*, 109, the poet once during his sojourn in Carinthia was turned out of a certain house in which he had sought shelter and compelled "to pass part or the whole of the night in seeking another."

5. **Campania's plain:** Doubtless the Campagna of Rome. The Campagna was the name bestowed in the early days of Roman history upon the undulating plain surrounding the city. Under the emperors, the Campagna was covered with the villas of wealthy Romans; majestic ruins and unusually picturesque scenic effects make the Campagna to-day a favorite subject for painters.

7-10. "I have met with no disappointment with respect to my East India voyage, nor are my resolutions altered; though at the same time, I must confess it gives me some pain to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's sickness since I saw you, yet I am not that strong, active man you once knew me. . . . I can neither laugh nor drink; have contracted an hesitating, disagreeable manner of speaking; and a visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have brought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it."

Letter from Oliver to Henry Goldsmith at Lowfield, in Westmeath, Ireland, 1759.

9. **thee:** Henry Goldsmith, the poet's elder brother, who appears to have possessed a lovable personality. The ties of affection between the brothers were very strong; the melancholy effect of Henry's death in 1768 is traceable in the later life and writings of the poet. One critic has spoken of Henry Goldsmith as "the only anchor that the poet in his stormy life could feel that he had to windward." Consult note on l. 140 of *The Deserted Village*.

15. **want and pain:** See note on l. 2 of *The Deserted Village*.—**repair:** betake themselves. Cf.

"Some to church repair,

Not for the doctrine, but the music there."

—Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, II., 142.

16-22. The Irish have long been famed for their hospitality. Cf. *The Deserted Village*, 142-162, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, I. and VI. For a keen analysis of the Irish temperament consult parts of the *Introduction to a Treasury of Irish Poetry*, edited by Stopford A. Brooke and T. W. Rolleston.

**21, 22. food, good:** Faulty rhyme, to be pardoned, perhaps, on the ground of poetic license. See note on ll. 79, 80.

**24. in wandering spent and care:** The prose, or natural, order would be, "spent in wandering and care." Poetry, for the sake of rhythm, often takes liberties with the order and the arrangement of words. For the construction of the verse see note on l. 79 of *The Deserted Village*.

"When will my wanderings be at an end? When will my restless disposition give me leave to enjoy the present hour? When at Lyons, I thought all happiness lay beyond the Alps; when in Italy, I found myself still in want of something, and expected to leave solicitude behind me by going into Romelia; and now you find me turning back, still expecting ease everywhere but where I am. It is now seven years since I saw the face of a creature who cared a farthing whether I was dead or alive." Letter from A Traveller, *The Bee*, I. Cf. Thackeray, Biographical edition, VII., 607. When Goldsmith set out for Edinburgh at the age of twenty-three, he was destined never to return to Ireland except on the wing of fancy.

**31-36:** An Alpine mountain crag is the point of vantage of the poet; below France, Italy and Switzerland meet and stretch away into the distance. The reflections induced by this sweeping prospect and by the poet's memories of his travels find imaginative expression in *The Traveller*. See Introduction.

**32. sit me down:** Consult note on l. 86 of *The Deserted Village*.

**34. an:** We should say "a." In Goldsmith's day, however, "an"—the original form of the indefinite article—was still used before a sounded "h" and consonants. See note on l. 93 of *The Deserted Village*, and *The Century Dictionary*.

**41. school-taught pride:** This phrase refers to the schools of the Stoic philosophers, who held and taught that all things in life were to be met in a spirit of passive endurance; to them joy and pain were meaningless terms.

**45-48. Ye glittering towns, etc:** The figures of speech known as parallelism and apostrophe. Goldsmith here imitates the example of poets like Pope, who, making their thoughts fit into a special form of verse—the heroic couplet—usually wrote mechanically. Such poets are often said to belong to the "classical school."

**48. Swains:** A. S. Swan, denoting first a "herdsman," then a "servant" and finally a "countryman;" "swain" is a favorite word in classical poetry and is used somewhat obscurely to denote "shepherds," "lovers," or "rustics" of any sort. Here the meaning is merely "peasant." Cf.



"Haply some hoary-headed swain may say  
 'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn.'"

Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.—dress: "till," "cultivate." The choice of words in this line makes the picture suggested vivid and realistic. Cf. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."—*Genesis* II., 15.

69. panting at the line: "Suffering from the intense heat at the equator." Cf. "Twenty of the dog-days now reign in's nose: all that stand about him are under the line." Shak., *Hen. VIII.*, V., 4.

72. And thanks his gods for all the good they gave: Cf. "Take the good the gods provide thee."—Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 88.

79, 80. given, even: See note on ll. 21–22; also Gummere's *Handbook of Poetics*, 155.

83. as well: See note on l. 24.

84. Idra: Idria is a mountain town on the rocky banks of the river Idria, in Carniola, an Austrian province noted for its mines of quicksilver.—Arno: The famous Arnus of the Romans; a large river of Tuscany in Italy, rising in the Apennines, flowing westward past the cities of Florence and Pisa, and emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. The Arno, though nearly 200 miles in length, has an uncertain navigability, since it is especially subject to floods. The valley of the Arno between Florence and Pisa is one of the most productive and most beautiful vales in Italy.

87. art: Art is sharply contrasted with Nature in l. 81. The blessings from Art, according to Goldsmith, include whatever man learns to do for his advantage or betterment, whereas Nature includes primarily impulses, instincts, and individual aptitudes. According to J. S. Mill, "Art is but the employment of the powers of Nature for an end." From this viewpoint Art is active; Nature, passive.

This form of personified contrast, often pushed to a labored extreme, is frequently met with in the verse of the Augustan poets. Goldsmith, though the spirit of his poetry looks forward rather than backward, was never able, by reason of his loyal adherence to the heroic couplet, to keep himself wholly untrammelled by the measured extravagancies peculiar to the verse of the classical school. See Introduction.

90. either: This use of "either" with more than two persons or things is at variance with the best modern usage.

**91-98.** The same idea pervades *The Deserted Village*. Cf. also ll. 397-412.

**100:** The poet's viewpoint is from an Alpine height. See note on ll. 31-36.

**103. von neglected shrub:** This phrase scarcely reveals a love of wild nature. Read Burns's *Lines to a Mountain Daisy* and Bryant's *The Fringed Gentian*.

**106-164:** Goldsmith's description of Italy, both in material and in phrasing, shows traces of the influence of Addison's *Letter from Italy*, published in 1701.

**113-122:** Cf. with these lines Addison's "Letter," ll. 55-60, 65-68:—

"See how the golden groves around me smile,  
That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle,  
Or, when transplanted and preserved with care,  
Curse the cold clime and starve in northern air;  
Here kindly warmth their mountain juice ferments.

Where western gales eternally reside,  
And all the seasons lavish all their pride;  
Blossoms and fruits and flowers together rise,  
And the whole year in gay confusion lies."

Cited by Tupper.

**121. gelid:** Etymologically this word would mean "very cool" or "icy." The meaning here, however, seems to be "pleasingly cool." In Ben Jonson's *The New Inn* occurs the phrase "Gelid sighs"; "gelid" is very uncommon in both prose and poetry.

**124. sensual bliss:** The bliss that comes from an exercise of the senses is probably the thought, vice not being implied, though some editors regard these words as a direct reference to Italian sensuality.

**125. florid:** From the Latin *flos*, a flower, and here used in its original, though uncommon, meaning of "flowery," or "luxuriant."

**127. manners:** The meaning is clearly wider than modern usage of the word would imply; perhaps "customs" or "habits of activity" is the idea. Hales asserts that in this line "manners" is equivalent to the Latin *mores*.

**129. zealous, yet untrue:** In this antithesis Goldsmith seems more concerned with the rhyme than the truth. The history of the Italian nation hardly warrants the use of so harsh a characterizing epithet as "untrue." "Zealous" is probably to be taken in a religious sense. Consult note on ll. 145-164.

**133-134:** The reference here is to the closing years of the Middle Ages when many of the Italian cities controlled the commerce of Europe. For a short account of the history of Italy during the Middle Ages consult Duruy's *History of the Middle Ages*, Book IX., XXIX.

**137. beyond e'en nature warm:** "Warm" is a predicate adjective agreeing with "canvas." The verb "glowed" is largely copulative in effect, and the connection between "canvas" and "warm" is consequently that between noun and adjective. Similar idioms are "feel strong," "look bright," etc.

**139-140:** The dying out of Italian commerce was hastened by the discovery of America and of the sea route to India. It will be recalled that Columbus was a Genoese.

**143. skill:** Cf. "So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has." Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, V., iii., 17.

**144. plethoric:** The thought is that the Italian state in the period of its decline may be compared to a human body bloated but undermined by disease.

**145-164:** During the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Italy was made up of numerous states, each sufficient unto itself and having little to do with other states except as rivalry and jealousy found issue in civil war. The Renaissance was the only unifying influence until the middle of the nineteenth century, when two large-visioned leaders arose, Cavour in Sardinia and Garibaldi, "the patriot leader of the South." Chiefly through the efforts of these men a desire for national liberty and unity was inspired in the populace, and the Italy of to-day was made possible.

**150. The pasteboard triumph:** The Italians have long been noted for their fondness for carnivals and processions,—substitutes for the splendor of the triumphs of the past. Cf. Goldsmith's *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning*, IV.

**151, 152. love, grove:** Consult note on ll. 21, 22.

**153, 154:** Goldsmith's biographers relate the following incident concerning the composition of these lines: Sir Joshua Reynolds paid a morning call to Goldsmith and found him writing *The Traveller* and teaching a pet dog to beg on its haunches,—both at the same time. The poet laughingly admitted that his double occupation suggested the above lines, the ink on the second being still wet when Sir Joshua came in.

**163. pile:** Cf. "High Whitby's cloistered pile." Scott, *Marmion*, II., 1.

**165-174:** Goldsmith's lack of admiration for the rugged beauty of Swiss scenery is typical of the attitude of the poets of the classical age toward wild nature. Grandeur and sub-

limity did not make the same appeal to Goldsmith that they later made to Byron and other romantic poets.

**167. bleak Swiss:** An effective use of the figure known as metonymy.

**170. man and steel:** This line refers to the far-famed prowess of the Swiss in arms. From the middle of the seventeenth century they were in demand as mercenary soldiers throughout Europe, especially in France and Spain. See Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, VI., VII.

**171. vernal:** A stock adjective in poetry of the eighteenth century.

**181. costly:** See note on l. 167.

**182. vegetable meal:** An allusion to the economic condition of the peasantry of Europe, especially of France, during the eighteenth century. Meat was seldom eaten by the poor. See Duruy's *History of France*, 515.

**187. finny deep:** See note on l. 167.

**190. savage:** Cf.

"When the grim savage (the lion), to his rifled den  
Too late returning, snuffs the track of men."

Pope, *Iliad*, XVIII.

**215. Hence:** An adverb modifying "flies," and to be regarded as almost synonymous with the phrase, "from such lands." The effect of this wording, however, is emphatic rather than tautological.—science: Cf. the Latin *scientia*.

**234. cowering:** Cf. Dryden's

"Our dame sits cowering o'er a kitchen fire."

**243-254:** These verses are full of autobiographical interest. Compare *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XX., for a more detailed account of Goldsmith's wanderings. Also see Introduction.

**244. Loire:** The principal river of France; it rises on the western declivity of the Cevennes and flows in a general westerly direction into the Bay of Biscay. The current is very swift and there are many treacherous shallows.

**253. skilled in gestic lore:** possessing much knowledge concerning the art of dancing. "Gestic" is now obsolete, and "gesticulatory," its successor, has come to apply almost exclusively to movements of the body and especially of the arms. Scott in *Peveril of the Peak*, XXX., refers to dancing as the "gestic art."

**256. Thus idly busy rolls their world away:** "Idly busy" is the rhetorical figure known as oxymoron,—the addition to a word of an epithet of opposite signification.

**265-266:** Lines often pointed out as packed with meaning and happily expressed.

**273. tawdry:** The origin of this word is interesting. Consult Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.

**276. frieze:** A coarse, woolen cloth woven originally in Friesland.

**277. cheer:** Cf. "Small cheer, and great welcome, makes a merry feast." Shak., *Comedy of Errors*, III., 1.

**283. Methinks:** The meaning of this word, as a study of its Anglo-Saxon parentage reveals, is "It seems to me." The verb is thus intransitive, and the pronoun a survival of the Dative case. Consult any unabridged dictionary.

**286. rampire:** A large area of the most fertile part of Holland lies below the surface of the North Sea, and has been reclaimed from inundation by means of dikes or ramparts. Consult *Story of the Nations, Holland*, XXIV.

**293. slow:** An aptly chosen adjective.

**303. Are:** The apparent plurality of the subject attracts the verb from the singular, the correct grammatical form, to the plural, although such a breach of grammatical usage is scarcely justifiable on any ground.

**305-312:** Goldsmith's portrayal of the Dutch is manifestly unjust. Goldsmith had his prejudices, and his writings are not free from wild statements and rash conclusions. Yet it seems surprising that the many virtues of the Dutch should have escaped his keenly observant eye. See note on l. 286.

**313. Belgic:** It is possible that the poet confuses the Belgians with the Dutch; Belgian may refer, however, in a far-fetched sense, to the ancestors of the dwellers in both the Netherlands and Belgium.

**319. Arcadian:** A favorite word in pastoral poetry. Arcadia was a province in the Peloponnesus in Greece in which the writers of the Renaissance laid the scene of pastoral romances. Later the idea of exact location was lost and the word became used in a general sense. Compare "In Tempe or the Vales of Arcady?" Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

"Those golden times

And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,

And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose."

Cowper, *The Task*, IV., *The Winter Evening*, 514.

*The Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney is, of course, recalled.

**320. Hydaspes:** The modern Jhelum, the westernmost of the five rivers of the Punjab, India. On its banks Alexander the

Great in 326 B.C., built a war fleet and conquered Porus, a powerful Indian king.

324. This line means that the climate is equable; there are no extremes of heat and cold except in fancy.

327. port: Cf.

"Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
Assume the port of Mars."

Shak., *Henry V.*, 1, cho.

333: The meaning of this line is that the peasant boasts that he scorns these rights. Observe the poet's use of the infinitive.

357. noble stems: Cf.

"Ye may all that are of noble stem,  
Approach and kiss her sacred vesture's hem."

Milton, *Arcades*, 82.

362: Goldsmith was no friend to literary patronage. Numerous anecdotes are told illustrative of his honest independence of spirit. One is that he rejected the patronage of the Duke (then the Earl) of Northumberland in the words, "I look to the booksellers for support, they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to forsake them for others." See Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*.

The fact that Goldsmith dedicated *The Traveller* to his brother Henry, *The Deserted Village* to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and *She Stoops to Conquer* to Samuel Johnson betokens contempt for patronage. Johnson was of like mold.

365: "The literature of the last century abounds in apostrophes to liberty." Hales.

379, 380. arms, warms: Consult note on ll. 21, 22. Cf.

"And the June sun warm

Setting as then over Fernside farm."

Whittier, *Telling the Bees*.

382-392: Read Chapter XIX. of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and the preface to Goldsmith's *History of England*. Regarding matters of government, the poet, despite his sympathy with the lower classes, was an uncompromising Royalist, believing, and often expressing his belief, in the divine right of kings.

382. Contracting regal power: These words derive their force from the fact that, at the time when *The Traveller* was written, the sovereign power of George III. as king was somewhat in jeopardy. The Tories supported the king, but the Whigs, in two warring factions, relentlessly opposed him. Consult Green's *Short History of the English People*.

**388:** In this line the poet alludes, no doubt, to Englishmen, who, gaining vast wealth from dishonorable enterprises in India, returned to England and purchased the votes of rotten boroughs. Compare Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*. . . . "The business of a servant of the company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred, or two hundred thousand pounds, as speedily as possible, that he might return home before his constitution had suffered from the heat, to marry a peer's daughter, to buy rotten boroughs in Cornwall, and to give balls in St. James's Square."

**397-412:** This passage contains the central theme of *The Deserted Village*.

**404. barren solitary pomp:** This is an especially vivid phrase. Lands that formerly gave support to many families, now had fallen into the possession of the rich, who occupied their acres in haughty isolation. Consult Introduction to *The Deserted Village*.

**406. fall:** In many cases entire villages were swept from the country-side to extend the domain of a wealthy estate-purchaser. See note on l. 404.

**407. duteous:** Cf. "Raphael's cheek so duteous and so loving," Robert Browning, *One Word More*, 15.

**410. beyond the western main:** The poet uses the same phrase in *The Deserted Village*, l. 368.

**411. Oswego:** A river in New York flowing north into Lake Ontario. The sonorous sound of the word probably accounts for its selection. It has been noted by many commentators that Goldsmith was one of the first poets to employ Indian nomenclature.

**412. Niagara:** Note the penultimate accent required by the meter. This pronunciation still prevails to a large extent in England.

**415-416.** These lines were doubtless inspired by the poet's memory of the French and Indian wars, the fierceness of which had appalled all England. Consult any reliable American history covering this ground.—**420, 429-434, 437-438.** These verses were written by Dr. Johnson. "The admirably pure and tender heart, and exquisite intellectual refinement implied in the Vicar and the Traveller, force us to love Goldsmith in spite of superficial foibles, and when Johnson prunes or interpolates lines in *The Traveller*, we feel as though a woodman's axe was hacking at a most delicate piece of carving." Leslie Stephen, *English Men of Letters Series, Johnson*, III., 78.

**436. Luke's iron crown:** A revolt of Hungarian peasants was headed in 1514 by two brothers belonging to the Transylvanian nobility, Luke and George Dozsa. The peasant force, according to some authorities consisting of nearly 50,000 men, purposed to wage a crusade against the Turks, but their religious zeal soon gave way to a desire for lawless power. While the army lay before Temesvar, which narrowly escaped capture, George, not Luke, Dozsa was taken prisoner by the supporters of the government, and forced to sit on a red-hot throne, wear a red-hot crown, and wield a red-hot sceptre, for allowing himself to be proclaimed King of Hungary. Some editors are of the opinion that Goldsmith deviated from historical fact to avoid making what might be construed as even a veiled reference to George III. of England. Consult *Story of the Nations, Hungary*.—**Damiens' bed of steel:** Robert Francois Damiens was a French fanatic who, in 1757, crowned a life of dissipation and idleness with an abortive attempt to stab Louis XV. as he was entering his carriage bound for the Trianon. By the populace, the Jesuits were believed to have been the instigators of the crime. Damiens was diabolically tortured in a vain effort to make him reveal the names of his supposed fellow-conspirators; boiling oil, slow fire, glowing pincers, and an iron-pointed bed-chair were the chief instruments employed. Finally his body was torn apart, limb by limb, by four strong horses; his remains were burned; and his family was exiled from France. Consult Guizot's *History of France*, Black's translation, VI., 221-222.

## NOTES

### THE DESERTED VILLAGE

**Line 1. Sweet Auburn:** There is no actual Auburn on the map, except an Aldbourn, or Auburn, in Wiltshire, near Marlborough; but there is no reason for supposing that Goldsmith had this village in mind. The name Auburn, according to Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*, II., 206, was suggested by the poet's friend and fellow member of The Literary Club, Bennet Langton. The euphony of the word no doubt had much to do with its final selection.

See Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*, 203, note on ll. 12, 129-136, and Introduction.

**2-4:** Pope or Johnson might have written these lines, so



typical are they of the prim manner of the verse of the classical school.

**2. health and plenty:** An example of the many personified abstractions scattered throughout both *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*. It is an interesting exercise to note and compute the number of times that Goldsmith makes use of this poetic device,—a link between his manner of writing and that of the classical versifiers. Consult Introduction, and note on l. 87 of *The Traveller*.

**4. parting:** Cf. "Now in peace my soul shall part to Heaven." Shak., *Rich. III.*, II., 1, 5.

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day." Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, 1.

**5-15:** Goldsmith's manner of writing verse, according to a law-clerk friend—Cooke, by name—was to take infinite pains, polishing and revising, until the connotation and the collocation of the words selected, satisfied all demands of precision. Concerning the composition of *The Deserted Village* in particular, an article appearing in an issue of *The European Magazine* in 1793 says:

"Ten lines, from the fifth to the fifteenth, had been his (Goldsmith's) second morning's work; and when Cooke entered his chamber he read them to him aloud. . . . 'Come,' he added, 'let me tell you this is no bad morning's work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy Shoemaker's Holiday with you.'"

**6. Seats of my youth:** Cf. "Seats of power," "seats of authority," "country-seat," "county-seat," etc.

**7. green:** a small piece of greensward often belonging to the community as a whole; in many cases, the green was a remnant of old, unappropriated common land. Consult Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, VII., XXI. Cf.

"I walk unseen  
On the dry smooth-shaven green."  
Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 66.

**10. cot:** Cf.

"At length his lonely cot appears in view."  
Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, 19.

**12. decent:** Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, X., where the Vicar says, "A decent behaviour and appearance in church is what charms me."

"Over thy decent shoulders drawn."  
Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 36.

If Dr. Strean, Henry Goldsmith's successor as rector of Kilkenny West in 1807, is to be believed, the details of this description are a reproduction of the scenery about Lissoy.

Sir Walter Scott, however, regards much of this identification as fanciful. See Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, III., 250, the Introduction, and notes on ll. 129-136.

**13. The hawthorn bush:** The hawthorn is a shrub, or small tree, growing usually to a height of about 25 feet, indigenous to Europe, Siberia and Northern Africa. Being tough in fiber, and producing a thick foliage, it is valuable for hedges. The hawthorn flowers generally in May. Cf.

"The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves  
Put forth their buds."

Thomson, *Spring*, 90.

"And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

Milton, *L'Allegro*, 67-68.

See note on ll. 129-136.

**14. talking age:** See note on l. 2.

**17. train:** Another favorite word with Goldsmith; it occurs nine times in *The Deserted Village* and twice in *The Traveller*. Cf.

"To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,  
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene."

Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, 5-6.

**20. young contending:** The absolute use of both the present and the past participle is a common construction in Goldsmith's poetry. Other examples of this construction occur in ll. 108, 111, 297. See note on l. 79.

**23. still:** Cf.

"And even the like precursor of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates."

Shak., *Hamlet*, I., 121-122.

**29. virgin:** A common synonym for girl, or maiden, in eighteenth century verse,—like matron for married woman, and swain for peasant.

**35. lawn:** Not an expanse of closely cropped sward—the meaning to-day—but a stretch of open country. Cf. l. 319 of *The Traveller*. "Lawn" is frequently used in the above sense by Chaucer, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Tennyson.

**37. tyrant's hand:** oppression on the part of a rich estate-owner. All editors refer to the action of one General Napier,

who, returning enriched from campaigning in Spain and taking up his abode near Lissoy, "turned all his tenants out of their farms that he might enclose them in his own private domain." See Introduction, and Irving, *Life of Goldsmith*. This incident may have been in Goldsmith's mind when these verses were written.

**39. only master:** Cf.

"One only being shalt thou not subdue."

Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, I., 265.

**40. half a tillage:** According to the poet, the land was more extensively tilled, and consequently more productive, when the peasants worked it than when it passed into the possession of the rich. This is scarcely the truth, however. See Introduction, and Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, VII., XXI.

**42. works its weedy way:** Notice the alliteration, another poetic device of which Goldsmith, like his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, was fond.

**44. hollow-sounding bittern:** A bird frequenting swamps and sedgy rivers. Its cry sounds like a far-away, uncanny booming.

Cf. "I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water."

Isaiah, XIV., 23.

"So that scarce

The bittern knows his time with bill ingulphed,

To shake the sounding marsh."

Thomson, *The Seasons*, *Spring*.

**49. shrinking:** An allusion to the emigration of the peasantry. See Introduction.

**51. Ill . . . ills:** Certainly a harsh line; perhaps purposely so, to fit the sense. Despite his keenly musical ear, Goldsmith permitted himself many lapses from smoothness. Consult Introduction.

**53. Princes and lords:** A phrase not original with Goldsmith; preceding poets had occasionally used it; later Burns incorporated it in the well known line of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*,

"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings." A close examination of the imagery of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* shows how sympathetically Burns had read *The Deserted Village*.

**55-56:** For a discussion of the truth of this sentiment see Introduction.

**57. England's griefs:** The Irish poet here is evidently think-

ing solely of England. Auburn need not have been Lissoy. See Introduction, and notes on ll. 1, 12, 37, 129-136.

**63. trade's unfeeling train:** Those getting wealthy through commerce and manufactures. This part of the poet's economic doctrine is obviously unsound. See Introduction.

**74. manners:** See note on l. 127 of *The Traveller*.

**76. confess.** Cf.

"The lovely stranger stands confest,  
A maid in all her charms."

Goldsmith, *The Hermit*, 91-92.

**79. elapsed:** Absolute use of the past participle. Cf. ll. 95, 157, 181, 393, and consult note on l. 20.—**return to view.** See note on l. 24 of *The Traveller*.

**84. In all my griefs:** The reference is doubtless to the poet's first four or five years in London, when he was struggling for a livelihood as a hack writer. See Black, *Life of Goldsmith*, English men of Letters Series, IV.

**85-86:** Note the pathos.

**86. lay me down:** In prose the reflexive "myself" would be used instead of "me." Cf. l. 32 of *The Traveller*. "To lay me down," "to husband out," and "(to) keep," may be regarded as infinitives equivalent in meaning to their respective gerunds (by laying me down, etc.) dependent upon the infinitive "to crown."

**87. husband out life's taper:** Cf. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, XVIII. "The Dutch frugally husband out their pleasures."

"There's husbandry in heaven;  
Their candles are all out."

Shak., *Macbeth*, II., ll. 4-5.

**93. as an hare:** Modern usage would say "a" hare. See note on l. 34 of *The Traveller*. The elaborate or formal simile was a characteristic feature of the verse of Goldsmith's day. Cf. with regard to effectiveness the use of the simile by Goldsmith and by Wordsworth.

**94. from whence:** This phrase, pleonastic though it is, apparently has the sanction of some writers of reputable English. See *The Century Dictionary*.

**96. Here to return:** Goldsmith often refers in tones of yearning to his ties of kith and kin in Ireland. Fashionable or learned society only, made his "heart crave familiar, confiding intercourse, family fire-sides," . . . which "bring out the heartiest and sweetest sympathies of his nature."

Irving, *Life of Goldsmith*, 446.

100. age: Cf.

“Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;  
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.”

Shak., *Sonnet* 11.

104. tempt the — deep: a Latinism. Rolfe cites *temptare Thetim ratibus*; Virgil's *Eclogues*, IV., 32.

105. guilty state: pomp and arrogance that evidence to the poet's mind criminal luxury; hence the significance of “guilty.”

106. imploring famine: See note on l. 2. Observe the number of abstract nouns personified in this passage.

107. latter end: Cf. “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” *Prov.*, XIX., 20.

109. Bends: A happily chosen verb. Compare its appropriateness with that of “sinks,” the reading in the first edition.

110. resignation: “Sir Joshua Reynolds painted a particularly fine picture in point of expression, especially of Resignation, and dedicated the print taken from it to Dr. Goldsmith, with some lines under it quoted from *The Deserted Village*. This seems to have been done by Sir Joshua as a return of the compliment to Goldsmith, who had dedicated the poem to him.”

Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*.

111, 112: Cf. the rhyming of these verses with that of verses 95 and 96.

118. to meet their young: “To meet” is here equivalent to the gerund, “at meeting,”—a common use of the infinitive in Shakespeare. Consult Abbott, *Shakespearean Grammar*, sec. 356. This construction is probably a Latinism. Cf. ll. 145, 148, 161, 195, 288, 293.

121. whispering wind: Note the union of sound and sense,—onomatopoeia. Find other onomatopoeic words in this passage.

122. vacant mind: Perhaps the reference is to a village half-wit.

124. nightingale: The poetic imagination again. According to Rolfe, there are no nightingales in Ireland. All editions refer to Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*: “Her (the nightingale's) note is soft, various, and interrupted; she seldom holds it without a pause above the time that one could count twenty. The nightingale's pausing song would be the proper epithet for this bird's music with us, which is more pleasing than the warbling of any other bird, because it is heard at a time when the rest are silent.”

126. fluctuate in the gale: A line after the mechanical fashion of Pope and his school. See note on ll. 2-4.

128. *bloomy*: Cf.

"O nightingale that on yon bloomy spray . . ."

Milton, *Sonnet to the Nightingale*.

129-136: The original of these verses is supposed to have been one Catherine Geraghty, a lonely widow who eked out a wretched livelihood in Lissoy. In the words of Dr. Streat (consult note on l. 12), "Purn, the name of the village-master, and the site of his schoolhouse, and Catherine Geraghty, a lonely widow—

'The wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread'

(and to this day [1807] the brook and ditches near the spot where her cabin stood abound with cresses), still remain in the memory of the inhabitants, and Catherine's children live in the neighborhood. The pool, the busy mill, the house where 'nut-brown draughts inspired,' are still visited as the poetic scene; and the 'hawthorn bush,' growing in an open space in front of the house, which I knew to have three trunks, is now reduced to one, the other two having been cut, from time to time, by persons carrying pieces of it away to be made into toys, etc., in honor of the bard and of the celebrity of his poem."

Cited by Phillips, *English Literature*, II., 77.

130. *plashy*: Cf.

"Seek'st thou the plashy brink

Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide . . . ?"

Bryant, *To a Waterfowl*.

133: This line suggests to several editors Wordsworth's "Goody Blake and Harry Gill."

136. *pensive*: Cf.

"The hermit trimm'd his little fire

And cheer'd his pensive guest."

Goldsmith, *The Hermit*, 47-48.

140. *ff*: Goldsmith probably wrote this description of the village preacher shortly after he had learned of the death of his brother Henry at Athlone, in May, 1768. Note the ring of genuine pathos. As showing the love of the poet for his brother, read the opening lines of *The Traveller* and compare them with this passage. It is also not improbable that Goldsmith worked into these verses some of the characteristics of his father, and perhaps, as certain critics suggest, of his Uncle Contrarine. Whatever its inspiration, the picture is that of an enduring type of English society. Consult Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*, II., 113;

Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*, chapter on *The Deserted Village*; Dobson's *Life*, 187; and Black's *Life*, chapter on *The Deserted Village*; also consult note on l. 9 of *The Traveller*.— **mansion**: Cf.

“O, what a mansion have those vices got  
Which for their habitation chose out thee.”

Shak., *Sonnet* 95.

**142. passing rich**: This use of passing as an intensive adverb is common in Shakespeare. Compare

“Is she not passing fair?”

Shak., *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV., 4.

Forty pounds seems to have been regarded as ample compensation for a country preacher; thirty-five pounds with certain perquisites was the annual stipend of the Vicar of Wakefield.

**145. to fawn**: Another gerund. See note on l. 118.

**149, 162. vagrant train**: See note on l. 17. The hospitality of the Irish **is** one of their most widely famed virtues. The poet knows whereof he speaks. Consult Irving's *Life*, I. and II.

**155. broken soldier**: weakened by illness or age, probably. The reference may be to “Paddy” Byrne, who was an ex-soldier and a master hand at recalling and inventing tales of war-time.

**162. His pity gave**: “The Man in Black, Dr. Primrose and The Village Preacher are honest champions of generosity, charity and hospitality.” See Introduction.

**163-164**: A couplet often quoted.

**167. as a bird**: A somewhat far-fetched simile. See note on l. 93.

**187, 188. given, heaven**: Faulty rhyme. Consult note on ll. 21, 22 of *The Traveller*.

**189-192**: Critics agree in pronouncing these among the noblest lines of the poem. Note that, though the simile stands alone, there is no main predicate. For a similar construction cf. the simile beginning in l. 287.

**194. furze**: A thorny shrub found chiefly in western Europe. Its height usually is from two to six feet; its leaves are prickleshaped; and its stem, hairy. In both spring and fall the furze puts forth beautiful yellow flowers.

**196-216**: The original of this portrait of the Village Master is supposed to have been Thomas (“Paddy”) Byrne. See the note on l. 155, Introduction, and any of the standard biographies of Goldsmith.

**198. I knew him well**: Another personal touch. Recall what is told about Goldsmith's conduct and progress in school.

**200. morning face:** Cf.

"And then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like a snail  
Unwillingly to school." Shak., *As You Like It*, II., VII.

**205, 206. aught, fault:** Faulty rhyme. "Fault," being regarded as from the French *faute*, contained no "l" till the middle of the sixteenth century, when the kinship of *faute* with the Latin *fallere* was recognized. The above rhyme may be partly justified on the ground that it is perhaps dialectic, as even to-day in many parts of rural Ireland, Scotland and England it is said that "fault" is pronounced without the "l."

**207, ff:** Note the playful sarcasm of these lines.

**209. terms:** "Under the common law system in England the judicial year was divided into four terms, the names of which indicated the time of year in which they were held, viz.: Hilary Term, Easter Term, Trinity Term, and Michaelmas Term. These terms were abolished by the Judicature Acts." *The New Internat. Encyclopedia*, XVI., 597.—**tides:** seasons of the church year; in a more restricted sense, feast-days, or festivals as Whitsuntide, Hallowtide. The Puritans scrupulously used "tide" rather than "mass" in such words as the following: Christ-tide (Christmas), Lamb-tide (Lammas), etc.

**218. forgot:** Cf.

"The blemish that will never be forgot."

Shak., *The Rape of Lucrece*, 536.

**219. thorn:** Cf. note on l. 13.

**221-237:** "Opposite to it (the hawthorn) is the village ale-house, over the door of which swings 'The Three Jolly Pigeons.' Within, everything is arranged according to the letter. . . . Nothing shook my faith in the reality of Auburn so much as this exactness, which had the disagreeable air of being got up for the occasion." Extract from a London periodical quoted by Irving, *Life of Goldsmith*, XXVIII. *The Deserted Village* made Lissoy so famous that an attempt was made by Captain Hogan, a relative of the poet, to reconstruct the village according to its poetic description.

**221. nut-brown draughts:** Cf.

"Then to the spicy nut-brown ale."

Milton, *L'Allegro*, 100.

"Shown him by the nut-brown maids."

Pope, *Dunciad*, II., 337.

**227-236:** "Compare with this attractive picture of a tavern the following lines from Goldsmith, *Description of an Author's*



*Bedchamber*, 1760 (slightly altered from a poetical passage in a letter to his brother Henry, 1759), and mark how a few changes of epithet have completely transformed a dirty interior." Tupper.

“A window patched with paper lent a ray  
That dimly showed the state in which he lay;  
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread,  
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;  
The royal game of goose was there in view,  
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew,  
The seasons framed with listing found a place,  
And brave Prince William show'd his lampblack face;  
The morn was cold,—he views with keen desire  
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire.  
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,  
And fire crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney board.”

**228. clock . . . clicked:** See note on l. 121.

**231. for ornament and use:** The pictures were perhaps hung over soiled or abraded portions of the walls.

**232:** The twelve good rules, commonly ascribed to King Charles I., were: Urge no healths; profane no divine ordinances; touch no late matters; reveal no secrets; pick no quarrels; make no comparisons; maintain no ill opinions; keep no bad company; encourage no vice; make no long meals; repeat no grievances; lay no wagers.—**royal game of goose:** According to Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes*, IV., 2 (XXV.), cited by Rolfe: “It is played upon a board with sixty-two compartments, and is called the game of goose because at every fourth and fifth compartment in succession a goose was depicted; and if the cast thrown by the player falls upon a goose, he moves forward double the number of his throws.”

**234. aspen:** A tree native to Great Britain and Scotland. The slightest ripple of air causes its leaves to quiver and tremble.—**fennel:** A biennial plant, three or four feet high, native to Southern Europe, but cultivated in England and America for the sake of its aromatic seeds and its leaves, which are used for canning.

**243. farmer's news:** Trips to market make the farmer a news-gatherer.—**the barber's tale:** The pertinency of this phrase is evidently not of recent origin.

**244. the woodman's ballad:** hunter's or forester's song; perhaps the reference is to Robin Hood.

**245-246:** Compare these verses with Longfellow's *The Village Blacksmith*.

**248. mantling bliss:** The figure is metonymy. Cf. this use of mantling with that in l. 17.—**bliss.** Another word that Goldsmith uses often.

**249. coy maid:** "The English barmaid, famed in song and story."

**250. kiss the cup:** Cf.

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine;  
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,  
And I'll not look for wine."

Ben Jonson, *Song to Celia*.

"The bride kissed the goblet, the knight took it up;  
He quaffed off the wine and threw down the cup."

Scott, *Young Lochinvar*.

**254. native:** Cf.

"Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild."

Milton, *L'Allegro*, 128-129.

—**art:** See note on l. 87 of *The Traveller*.

**256. owns:** Cf.

"I own the soft impeachment."

Sheridan, *The Rivals*, V., 3.

**258. Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined:** An effective grouping of negative participles. Recall Scott's "unwept, unhonored and unsung" (*Lay of the Last Minstrel*, VI.), and Byron's "unknelled, unconfined, and unknown," (*Childe Harold*, IV., 179). The same word scheme is found also in Milton and in Shakespeare.

**259. pomp:** Cf.

"For on her, as queen,  
A pomp of winning Graces waited still."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII., 61.

**265-285:** Lines expressing the leading tenet of the poet's economic creed. See Introduction, and notes on ll. 37, 63, 295.

**267. 'Tis yours:** Cf.

"Farewell! Be it ours to embellish thy pillow."

Moore, *Lalla Rookh*.

**269, ff:** The meaning is that, while much money is flowing into England as a result of her expanding commerce, this wealth is obtained by the barter of necessities; so the rich man gets richer, and the poor man, poorer. Cf. *The Traveller*, l. 398, and

"However puffed with power and gorged with wealth  
A nation be; let trade enormous rise,

Let East and South their mingled treasure pour,  
Till, swell'd impetuous, the corrupting flood  
Burst o'er the city and devour the land."

Thomson's *Liberty*, cited by Tupper.

**287. fair female:** This use of the word "female" was common in reputable writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nowadays, good taste prefers "woman," and restricts "female" to use as an adjective, or as a noun with reference to animals of a lower order than man.

**293. solicitous to bless:** True as this portrait is to one of the repellent phases of life, there is a note of pathos running through it.

**294. In all the glaring impotence of dress:** Goldsmith did not always practice what he preached. To him clothes were anything but "impotent." See Introduction.

**295. Thus fares the land:** Cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 51.—by luxury betrayed. Boswell reports that Johnson once remarked at a dinner given by Gen. Oglethorpe in honor of Boswell, Goldsmith and Johnson: "Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. Sir, no nation was ever hurt by luxury; for, as I said before, it can never reach but to a very few."

Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Edited by Birrell, III., 73.

**297. verging to decline:** See note on l. 20.

**312. To pamper luxury and thin mankind:** For comment on this false reasoning see Introduction.

**315, ff:** Note the profusion of vivid contrasts in these verses.

**318. the black gibbet:** In the eighteenth century the gallows was a common feature of the landscape,—especially in the suburbs. "Capital punishment was, of course, more frequent than in our days, because there were so many more offenses punishable by it. In London alone, from the commencement of Sir Thos. Abney's mayoralty in 1701, to the end of that of Sir Richard Hoare in 1713, 242 malefactors were hanged at Tyburn and other places." Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, XL., 407.

Regarding the frequency of executions conditions were about the same in Goldsmith's day. Green Arbour Court, where he lived from 1759 till 1761, was near the famous Newgate prison and Old Bailey Sessions House, whither all prisoners apprehended within ten miles of London were taken and, if condemned, publicly executed.

**321. blazing square:** There being no street lamps, "link-boys" carried torches to guide, on the streets at night, the steps

of pedestrians and the progress of coaches. For an interesting account of London during Goldsmith's day consult Besant's *London in the Eighteenth Century*.

**326. the poor houseless, shivering female:** Sympathy for the outcast was one of Goldsmith's finest traits. See Irving, *Life of Goldsmith*, XXXV.

In *The City Night-Piece* in *The Bee*, IV., occurs the following passage: "Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief." Cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 332. See Introduction.

"Goldsmith in 326-336 anticipates Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night* 82-90, and *To a Mountain Daisy* 31-36, and Hocd's *The Bridge of Sighs*." Whiteford.

**328. innocence distress:** See note on l. 2.

**330. Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:** There can be no finer descriptive poetry than this verse. For critical comment see Black, *Life of Goldsmith*, chapter on *The Deserted Village*. Cf.

"O fairest flower! no sooner blown than blasted,  
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly."

Milton, *Ode on the Death of a Fair Infant*.

"Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies."

Milton, *Lycidas*, 142.

**338. participate her pain:** A stereotyped phrase. See note on ll. 2-4.

**343, ff.** Goldsmith's idea of Georgia and of the New World in general was rather vague, though no more so than that of many Englishmen of his day. Goldsmith saw only the pathetic aspect of the emigration of the peasants; it never occurred to him that the prospects of the exiles might have a happy side. "He cannot fancy his hearth blazing as brightly on the other side of the Atlantic as in the old country, or picture any 'Smiling Village' there with gay swains and coy-glancing maidens." Hales.

**344. Altama:** The Altamaha (accent on the last syllable), a river in Georgia, of which the poet may have heard his friend, Gen. Oglethorpe, speak, the latter having been instrumental in establishing the colony of Georgia in 1732.

**355. crouching tigers:** "Some commentators object to this on the ground that there are no tigers in Georgia; Rolfe thinks that the reference is to the jaguar and the puma, 'the American tigers.' Probably the actual presence or absence of the tiger was a matter about which Goldsmith was utterly indifferent. There are similar errors in other parts of the description. Goldsmith

wanted tigers for poetical purposes, as Shakespeare required lions in the forest of Arden."

Pancoast, *Standard English poems*, 661.

**369, 370:** Note the effective repetition of words and phrases in this couplet.

**386. things like these:** The innocence and the happiness of rural life are the things referred to,—the central idea of the poem. "These" has no expressed antecedent.

**398:** Here begins a figure known as "vision," sometimes defined as "The representation of past events, or imaginary objects and scenes, as actually present to the senses." Read Byron's *Apostrophe to Rome* in Canto II of *Childe Harold*.

**402. shore, strand:** Goldsmith evidently distinguishes between these two words. Strand may mean the line of sand next the sea; shore, the soil beyond the strand.

**408. sensual joys:** See note on l. 124 of *The Traveller*.

**409. degenerate times:** A period with many interests unfavorable to poetry. Recall Macaulay's famous sentence, "As civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines." *Essay on Milton*.

**410. To catch the heart:** Does not this phrase apply with special force to Goldsmith's own poetry?

**412. my solitary pride:** Goldsmith would have liked to write poetry better than prose; and it was to earn money that he paid more attention to the latter. He is reported to have said, "I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail muses, they would let me starve. Then by my other labours I can make shift to eat and drink and have good clothes."—**My shame in crowds:** Boswell quotes Johnson as saying with reference to Goldsmith's conversational abilities: "Goldsmith should not be forever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Boswell; *Life of Johnson*, edited by Birrell, III., 85, 86.

**415. nobler arts:** Music, painting, architecture, sculpture, etc.

**418. Torno:** There is a Lake Tornea in northern Sweden, and a river Tornea, that flows into the Gulf of Bothnia.—**Pamamarca.** One of the peaks of the Andes near Quito in Ecuador, South America. The poet gains in effect by making his allusions widely distant from each other.

**427, ff:** "Dr. Johnson . . . favored me by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's '*The Deserted Village*,' which are only the last four." Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Edited by Birrell, II., 164. See note on l. 420 of *The Traveller*.

## SUGGESTIVE MATERIAL FOR THE TEACHER

### IN GENERAL

**The Teaching of Poetry.** Can poetry be taught? Many good teachers of English hold, not without much truth, that poetry, being largely illusive and imaginative, appealing primarily to the heart, cannot, strictly speaking, be taught; others see in the teaching of poetry wide opportunities to arouse a love of the beautiful, to interpret life, and to determine and strengthen character. In each point of view there is truth. The first object of the study of poetry is obviously to give emotional pleasure to the reader; temperaments varying as they do, not all who study the same poetic masterpiece will experience, and cannot be trained to experience, the same degree of emotional pleasure. Nevertheless, it is the business of the teacher to aim, first of all, to arouse and to cultivate in his pupils the spirit of appreciation. Analysis and critical study sensibly carried out should be, and may be, made a most effective means to this end.

**The Teacher's Personality.** To teach poetry successfully the teacher must be himself genuinely fond of poetry. He must possess, to a large degree, the interpretative faculty, and, to some degree, the critical faculty, if he would know whereof he speaks. To this supremely important aspect of the teacher's equipment—the ability to interpret at first hand—the “atmosphere” of the classroom will always respond; there will be “life.”

**Method.** The place and the importance of method in the teaching of poetry are not to be denied. The editor once heard a successful teacher of English say: “Method is the man or woman behind the desk; that is, there is no such thing as method.” True enough, from one point of view, and yet like all paradoxes, such a statement is not the whole truth. Indeed, the problem of knowing how to conduct a class in English so as to make every phase of the instruction count, is perplexing. A few suggestions, therefore, that are the outgrowth of experience, may have a little value.

**First Reading.** The first thing to be done is to have the pupils read the poem at one sitting, if possible, so that they will gain some notion of it as a whole. The teacher should

ask questions looking to this end,—questions bringing out in a general way the purpose, the setting, the story (if there is any), the prominent descriptive parts, and the characters. At this stage of the instruction the less said about style, the better. Original opinions, no matter how crude, if they are sincere, are to be welcomed. Even let the poem be interpreted in terms of what the pupils already know and have seen. Encourage the pupils to talk over their English work at home. Request them to bring to class the opinions of parents or friends. The main thing is that the pupils be made to feel that the poem has something in it for them. Familiarity will not breed contempt.

**Collateral Reading.** A good deal of collateral reading may be profitably assigned before the analytic study of the poem is begun. When the poem was written, by whom, why, how it was received; the political, the social, the literary life, of the time—such are some of the lines of study that would suggest material for special reports, the substance of which the class should be required to jot down in notebooks and later to review for examination. Several results will thus ensue: familiarity with books, and perhaps a taste for reading, a broad knowledge of the setting of the poem, and an arousal of interest in the classroom work.

**Analytic Study.** The pupils ought now to be ready to examine the poem more or less minutely. The choice and the arrangement of material and the language should receive attention. One caution here: let the teacher beware of falling into the error of expecting too much from immature minds. And yet boys and girls are not devoid of a sense of humor and pathos, of the beautiful and the sublime in life and in literature; and there is no reason why it should not be highly profitable to point out such and kindred elements in the poem that is being studied. It is a good thing to encourage the pupils to bring into class illustrations from any source, of the chief qualities of style, comparison and contrast are helpful. Happy turns of expression; vivid words, passages worthy of being committed to memory, peculiarities of diction and construction, allusions, figures of speech, the meter, the substance of the notes, the main features of the structure of the poem,—all these aspects of style, a careful analysis must take into account.

**General Review.** After this analysis a general review of everything covered in class will be found profitable. It is often effective for the teacher to read parts of the poem to the class, the books being closed, and then to ask where the passage read

occurs, the point of it, and the relation of it to the remainder of the poem.

**Critical Estimates.** At this stage of the study of the poem a few happily written critical estimates may be passed upon by the class. Here is a chance to introduce the pupils to a few fundamentals of literary criticism. The mistake should not be made, however, of treating such work as of supreme importance.

**Final Reading.** The last thing for the teacher to do is to read the poem aloud to the class, never making a comment. In this way the swing and the spirit of the poem will constitute the final impression.

**Reading in Class.** It is agreed that one important phase of the duty of every teacher of English is to give instruction in the oral reading of poetry. Unfortunately, poor reading—words run together, a strident monotony of tone, a sing-song inflection, a stumbling pronunciation—is the rule, rather than the exception. It is not such a difficult thing, this reading—that is, this interpreting—of poetry. Let the mood of the reader be receptive and appreciative; then the following suggestions will be of service. First, enunciate distinctly, separating the words and the syllables and articulating the final consonants clearly: to this end read aloud in private, practising difficult sounds and words. Secondly, be sure of the pronunciation of every word, placing the stresses, major and minor, just where they belong. Thirdly, before going into class have a definite idea of the meaning of every sentence and of every word in the sentence. Emphasis will then largely take care of itself, for some words will stand out in the thought more prominently than will others. Fourthly, breathe deep; send the voice forward; make the tones resonant and sympathetic. Fifthly, be animated in your reading; the eye, the countenance, even the attitude, should reflect the spirit of the poem. This is the most important caution of all.

**Notebooks.** Notebooks, preferably of a uniform kind, have their place in work in English. The teacher should carefully plan his own system regarding the taking of notes, and hold his class rigidly to it.

**Vocabulary Enlargement.** One result of the study of any piece of literature ought to be the enlargement of the pupils' active list of words. An effective device is to require the adding of at least three new words at the end of every theme written outside of the class, the understanding being that such words have been looked up in the dictionary with reference to their exact meaning, exact spelling, exact pronunciation, and are to



be used in later themes. Even if many words are forgotten, many will remain in the memory.

**Committing to Memory.** If a poem is worth studying, at least parts of it are worth committing to memory. Only one or two things need to be said upon this matter. Let the teacher make sure that the assignments are accurately learned, and that they are interpreted—not merely recited—in class with as much appreciation as can be aroused.

## OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF THE POEMS

### A. Purpose.

1. Is the poem written to entertain, to enforce a belief of the author, or to impart a moral or spiritual truth?
2. Is the purpose stated or merely implied?

### B. Plot.

1. Does the poem tell a story, or is the appeal wholly to the emotions?
2. Are there digressions and episodes?
3. Is there suspense?
4. Does the story develop the characters?
5. Tell the story as concisely as possible.

### C. Characters.

1. Are there many or few?
2. Are the characters stationary or developing?
3. Are the lives and actions of the characters interrelated?
4. Would you divide the characters into chief and subordinate?
5. What does the poet's portrayal of character reveal concerning his observation, his experience, his insight, his ideals?

### D. Setting.

1. Where is the scene of the poem? When?
2. Is there much description? If so, of what kind? Nature? Persons?

3. Is there local color?

4. Your own estimate of the writer as a descriptive poet.

### E. Classification of the poem.

1. Narrative? Lyric? Dramatic? Why?

### F. Style.

1. In general.

- a. Is there humor, pathos, irony, beauty, grandeur?

- b. By what adjectives would you characterize the style?

2. Contrast.

Is there much weighing of thoughts over against thoughts? Persons? Words?

3. Use of words.

a. Specific or general.

b. Size of vocabulary.

c. Colloquialisms, foreign words, barbarisms, etc.

4. Allusions.

5. Figures of Speech.

6. Mood or spirit.

G. Meter.

1. Composition.

2. Melody.

H. Passages to be committed to memory.

I. Critical opinions.

1. Give substance of a few.

J. Author's rank as compared with that of other poets of similar kind.

(Compare Goldsmith with Collins, Gray, Johnson, Pope, Byron, Burns, Wordsworth.)

K. Your own estimate of the poet as revealed by his writings.

## THEMES

If the prime object of the study of any division of literature is to develop the appreciative powers, a secondary but also important object is to train the pupils to talk and to write more effectively; and the best way to do this is by means of assigned themes on subjects taken from, or bearing upon, whatever masterpiece is being read by the class. The following cautions may merit consideration by the teacher.

A. Give time to oral themes. In life, talking is more important than writing. Pay primary attention to matter.

B. Be systematic as to written themes. Mark off themes handed in late.

C. Do not assign more themes than you can look over.

D. Assign vivid subjects, usually within the pupils' observation, experience or reading.

E. Often help the pupils to select their own subjects.

F. Strive for variety in the selection and the treatment of subjects. Select subjects from all the school interests of the pupils. The teacher of composition has a rich opportunity to effect correlation between the various branches in the school curriculum.

G. Develop the idea of having a point to whatever is said or written.

H. Have the pupils correct one another's themes in class.

I. Help pupils to detect their own errors. For this purpose personal interviews should be systematically arranged.

J. Be sparing of red ink. Correct one thing at a time. Encourage.

K. Foster reasonable individuality of expression. No two people talk just alike.

L. Be free and natural in your own choice of English. "Example is better than precept."

M. Do not strike out humor. Mark Twain belongs to literature.

N. Avoid discouragement both on your own part and on the part of your pupils. Do the best you can and be cheerful.

### QUESTIONS ON THE TRAVELLER

Whom has Goldsmith in mind in the opening verses? What kind of man do you infer Henry Goldsmith to have been? Draw a distinction between his character and the poet's. Why are lines 23-29 especially pathetic? Is the poet's point of vantage on an Alpine height to be taken in a strictly literal sense? Draw an imaginary picture of the panorama that the poet sees. Show that lines 36-50 are didactic in tone. Is such didacticism or moralizing necessary to poetry? Wherein may it become a danger? Show by quotations from lines 62-80 that every land thinks itself the best. Which two lines of this passage contain the lesson or purpose of the poem? Reproduce in detail the thought of lines 81-98. Give a detailed description of Italy respecting natural advantages and respecting the people themselves. Is the poet just in his description of a tropical people? Compare nature's bounty to Switzerland with that to Italy. Compare also in detail the Swiss as a race, with the Italians. What inference do you draw concerning the beneficence of nature? What are the peculiar virtues and vices of France? What are the distinctive characteristics of the Dutch? Is the poet wholly just to them? How would you know that Goldsmith was an Englishman? What attribute of England appeals to him most? What weaknesses does he detect and deplore?

Comment upon their truth or their exaggeration. State in your own words the conclusion reached by the poet in his search for happiness. Do you agree with him?

### QUESTIONS ON THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Give a general description of Auburn. What two pictures does the poet sharply contrast? Compare Auburn with your village or with one that you know well. Is the poet true to life? If not, has he a right to exaggerate? What is the poet's attitude toward rural life? Is he sincere or affected in his sentiments? What class of persons enlists his sympathies? Are his ideas about the increase of trade true? What place had the poet probably in mind when he penned lines 75-82, or the whole poem, for that matter? What is to be said pro and con concerning the viewing of Auburn as Lissoy? Are the details true to life or partly imaginative? Would you like to know the village preacher? What were his leading qualities? Contrast the schoolmaster with the preacher. Who is supposed to have suggested the former?—the latter? Why does the poet lament the destruction of the ale house? Reproduce this description in detail. In his comparison between the rich and the poor is Goldsmith wholly just? What is your opinion of such statements as, "Contentment comes from ignorance," "Rural life develops character better than does city life?" Discuss the poet's ideas regarding the effect of an expanding commerce upon the English peasantry. Were Goldsmith's gloomy views regarding emigration borne out by fact? Comment upon the poet's views of the new world. What is the poet's idea of the function of poetry? Do the verses dealing with this point have a direct bearing on the rest of the poem? What reason can you advance for their introduction?

### QUESTIONS BASED ON BOTH POEMS

What do *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* reveal about Goldsmith the man,—his knowledge, his sympathies, his prejudices, his power of observation, his character? Cite passages from the poems to substantiate your opinions. Find instances of pathos, humor, grandeur, vividness of description—whether of persons or of scenes. Comment upon the selection and the ar-

rangement of details. What is the test of vividness? Do you consider Goldsmith at his best as a portrayer of scenes or of character? Why? What principles of descriptive writing that you are already familiar with, does the poet use? Find examples of a happy epithet, a vigorous turn of phrase. What general statement would you make concerning Goldsmith's choice and use of words? Collect examples of Goldsmith's use of personification, simile, metaphor, apostrophe, metonymy. What conclusion do you reach concerning the poet's use of figures of speech? What is the purpose of figurative language? Is there any danger to be guarded against in its use? Comment upon Goldsmith's use of contrast (a) in thought, (b) in style. Discuss the general structure of both poems respecting unity, proportion, coherence, emphasis. Give a final opinion concerning Goldsmith the poet, stating in detail the reasons for your conclusions.

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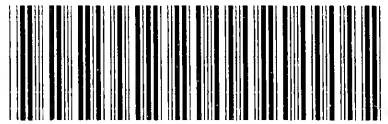
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